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# ALTON PARK;

OR

## CONVERSATIONS

ON

## RELIGIOUS AND MORAL SUBJECTS;

CHIEFLY DESIGNED

FOR THE AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION

OF

YOUNG LADIES.

[Mary Winter]

312448  
28. 2. 35

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TO THE  
RIGHT HONORABLE  
THE COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY.

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MADAM,

IN publishing a work, the chief object of which is, to display the advantages of a moral and religious education, and thus contribute, in however small a degree, to the glory of God, and the promotion of the real interests of society, I feel that there is no person to whom it could be dedicated with greater justice than to your ladyship, since no one more strictly exemplifies, in every relation of life, the principles which it has been my feeble aim to recommend.

Ever solicitous to instil sentiments of piety and virtue into the minds of your own daughters, your ladyship employs, at the same time, the resources of your elevated rank in diffusing the benefits of solid instruction among the children of the poor

I shall always feel grateful for the honor of being permitted to inscribe this production to your ladyship, and I only lament, that my humble offering is not more worthy of your distinguished patronage.

I am, Madam,

With the greatest respect,

Your ladyship's most obliged  
and very obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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# ALTON PARK;

OR

## CONVERSATIONS

ON

### RELIGIOUS AND MORAL SUBJECTS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

"How glad I am our cross governess is gone!" said Teresa to her sisters, as she was amusing herself with her doll and other toys.—"Why so?" asked Frances hastily, "I am sure she was not cross."—"Not to *you*, perhaps," rejoined Teresa, "but she was always teasing me about my books; and I do not like study. *Now*, you know, I amuse myself as I please, and nobody contradicts me: besides, we are to dine every day with papa and mamma, and shall not be tormented with 'Sit upright, hold up your head, do not eat so fast,' and all that nonsense. I hope we shall never have a governess again."—"Do not flatter yourself with that hope, my little sister," interrupted the gentle Maria, who was attentively copying a flower she had just gathered; "do not expect our dear mamma will suffer us to remain long without instruction; she is too anxious for our improvement."—"I know I am very sorry our late governess is gone," rejoined Frances, mournfully, "nor do I think we shall get a better."—"Mamma is not quite of your opinion, I suppose, Frances," said Maria, "by dismissing her so quickly after her return from the Continent, without even waiting till she was provided with another."

"I believe," resumed Frances, "she was not entirely satisfied with our improvement, during the time she was absent. But then mamma expects such great things from us, and wants us to be wise, and better than any others of

our age. I believe she would like to have us studying or praying from morning till night."

"Frances," interrupted Maria hastily, "mamma is not unreasonable; she requires no such thing; be not unjust to her. Where shall we find a mother more affectionate, more careful of our health, more attentive to our comfort? Even in our recreations she interests herself, that they may be diverting and beneficial. Although she herself passes much time in prayer, you are aware she does not ask the same of us, and is always ready to quit her books whenever we desire to enjoy her company."

"Well," replied Frances, "I know all this; but among the ladies who visit here, are there any who spend so much time in prayer as mamma does? Yet I should think they are quite as good, or she would not invite them; and"—"Hush! Frances, you forget of whom you are speaking. Where did you learn these sentiments? You did not formerly think in this manner!"—"It has been pointed out to me," said Frances.—"But have you remarked," continued Maria, "that if our own dear mother prays more than many do, she does not, at least, inconvenience any one by it, because, while others sleep till nine or ten in the morning, she rises at seven; and again, while many ladies employ hours in dressing and changing their dress, mamma limits herself to half an hour; she makes no parade of what she does, nor ever intimates a wish that we should follow her example."—"How eloquent you are become just now, Maria! you need not be so warm upon the subject."—"I think, dear sister, it does not quite become you to criticise thus freely a parent's actions, particularly when those actions are not only without blame, but are worthy of our imitation. If you mention these things to one, you will perhaps, without thinking of the consequence, mention the same to others."

"Oh no! indeed I would not," said Frances emphatically, "I should be afraid they would tell mamma. You, I know, are so scrupulous, that you will not repeat any thing I say, if it is likely to get me into disgrace; but——"—"But what, Frances?"—"Why, I fear that, when we grow up, mamma will be so very strict, that we shall never be allowed to do what other young ladies of our rank are accustomed to."—"And what is that, sister?"—"Oh! to go to the opera, to balls, plays, masquerades, &c.. which I long



to see, as I am told they are very amusing : besides, I expect we shall not be permitted to *dress* like others, but be obliged to wear long sleeves, and frocks up to our throats, till we are married. I am very unhappy," exclaimed Frances, bursting into tears.

"How sorry I am, dear sister!" said Maria, tenderly kissing off the falling tear, "that Miss Belton could not amuse you otherwise than by filling your head with these ideas. But surely you are not serious. What folly will it not be to make yourself miserable about what cannot affect either of us at least these five years! for, you know, mamma has often said we should not leave the school-room till we were eighteen; whereas now I am just thirteen, and you almost a year younger."

"I wish, Maria, I could be always as contented as you are; nothing seems to give *you* any concern, whilst I have a thousand troubles every day. What is the reason of this difference?"—"It is, I believe," resumed Maria, "because I do not make myself uneasy about things that are unavoidable; and for this advantage I am indebted entirely to the kind instructions of dear mamma, who, you know, advises us not to make troubles of trifles, but to take all as coming from God, without whose permission nothing happens."

"If I were as wise as you, Maria, I should do better." "This is not my wisdom, Frances, but the words of mamma, impressed upon my memory."

"Why does not mamma teach me these things, since they are equally as necessary for me as for you?"—"And has she not, Frances, given you the same lessons? does she ever instruct one without the other? are we not both her children, and equally dear to her?"

"I do not think we are *equally* dear to her," said Frances, pettishly; "she loves you better than me, nor am I the only one that has perceived it." "Sister," said Maria, a tear starting in her eye, "you are unjust to our affectionate mother: how much would she be afflicted if she knew your sentiments! You forget how inattentive you have been to her lessons; how tedious the time ever appears to you, when she is speaking on serious subjects, and how often she has to reprove you for not listening to her. Your eyes are wandering from one object to another in search of something to divert your mind; and you are constantly in-

interrupting her with frivolous questions. You must not, then, be surprised that you do not remember what she says."

"You pass, however," said Frances, "a great deal more time with her than I do, and, therefore, ought to profit more."—"I acknowledge I ought to profit more by her excellent lessons than I do, particularly as I am the eldest; but if I am more with her than you are, whose fault is it, Frances?"

"Oh! it is because she likes your company better than mine," replied Frances tauntingly. "No, sister, not so, I assure you; it is only because I like her company better than you do."

"How so?" resumed Frances.—"Why, you say mamma's instructive or serious conversation makes you melancholy, and you find an excuse to leave the room. When she asks us to walk with her in the garden, in five minutes' time you tell her you are tired with walking so slowly, and run bounding off in chase of a butterfly—to have a game of romps with Teresa—or, for want of these resources, to amuse yourself with Bijou."

"Do *you* never do these things, then?" said Frances.—"Yes, frequently; but I do not choose the time when I am at liberty to enjoy the company of mamma, who, for these two years, has been almost always confined to her room; and often too ill to speak to us."

"But, now," resumed Frances, "is it not tedious to be obliged to walk so very slowly?"—"Rather so, I allow; but the pleasure of seeing her well enough to walk a little, more than compensates the inconvenience, and I would willingly give up my amusements every day for the satisfaction of walking or sitting with her."

The opening of the door, and the entrance of Miss Mor-daunt to remind them that the first dinner bell had rung, interrupted their serious conversation, and gave it for a few moments a new turn. "Do not go away, Jane," said Teresa; "I want you to cut me out a doll's frock. Where have you been this long time?"—"In the music-room, my little darling; and had you come there, I would have endeavored to prevail on you to play."

"Ah, I was afraid of that, and, therefore, would not come."—"Do you, then, wish to forget all that you have learned?"—"Oh, no! but mamma said we should have holidays for three weeks; and, you know, it will be no

holidays if I must learn lessons and play music. Besides, we have no governess now."

"But Maria, I see," resumed Miss Mordaunt, "has not been idle, although there is no governess. Look, Teresa, at the pretty flower she has painted; you ought to imitate her example."

"Do not hold me up as an example for her, dear Jane! I am too imperfect a model to take a copy from. She will do better to look up to you, who have fewer faults to correct." Jane's reply was prevented by an immediate summons to dinner, which the ladies obeyed with great alacrity.

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## CHAPTER II.

"PAPA," exclaimed the lively Teresa, on hearing her father's voice as she approached the dining room, "papa, do you know you are to have company at dinner to-day, and every day for three whole weeks?"—"Indeed! and who are to be the guests I am to have the honor of entertaining? I hope they are not noisy ones."—"Oh, papa! surely you know; why your own three little girls; mamma invited us; are you not glad?"—"How can I be otherwise than glad, my little chatter-box, to receive visitors so dear to my heart?" replied Sir James, embracing his three daughters with paternal tenderness.—"I am indeed happy to see you, and I pray God it may always be with equal pleasure."—"I hope so, dear papa," replied Maria, returning affectionately his fond embrace, "indeed I hope so."—"I do not doubt it, my dear child; continue to be good, and your presence will always be a blessing to your parents. Go, my dears, and salute your mother; it is now near two years since you have enjoyed the pleasure of her company at dinner. But is there not another guest who has some claim to my attention? Where is Jane? she, also, is one of my beloved family."

Gratifying to the heart of the amiable timid orphan was this kindly greeting from Sir James, whom she respected as a father, though conscious that she had not a daughter's claim upon him. She had descended to the dining room

with the young ladies, and having modestly retired to a window, that she might not be observed by her benefactors till they had received the congratulations of their little family, was just advancing to pay her compliments, when Sir James Alton inquired after her. "Why did not you come forward with my daughters, my dear girl? are you not glad of our return?"

"Nothing could have given me greater pleasure: but I felt I had no right to obtrude myself on your notice, though my heart longed to express its grateful acknowledgments." Then taking the hand of Sir James, and respectfully kissing it, she added, "Permit me to congratulate you on the renovated health of my beloved benefactress, and may it long be preserved to her! I should be most ungrateful, did I not make it the subject of my daily prayers."

"A thousand thanks to you, my dear Miss Mordaunt. It is not, I hope, necessary to repeat to you again my assurance of protection; be as much at your ease in our presence as if you were indeed our child; I wish you to consider yourself as such. I am sure my daughters will readily grant you a sister's share in our affections; will you not, my dear girls?" asked Sir James, addressing himself to his children.

"Most willingly, papa," said Maria, greatly pleased with the opportunity of praising her friend; "indeed we love her, and are much indebted to her example and good advice: for when we are likely to forget our duty, she kindly reminds us of it, lest, by doing wrong, we should subject ourselves to your displeasure."

"And I love her too, I am quite sure," said Teresa, throwing her arms around her neck, and kissing her with all her strength; "she dresses my doll, mends my toys, and does twenty little things my sisters have not patience for; and, mamma, when you were away, she used to talk to me about you, that I might not forget you." The eyes of Jane were suffused with tears, and her feelings overpowered, by those unlooked-for testimonials of affection.

"Grateful child!" she exclaimed, as she kissed the animated Teresa, "the little I have done deserves not to be remembered; I beseech you say no more about it. I owe more than I can ever possibly repay."

"Your kindness to our dear children, during our absence, balances the debt. But, Frances, my love," continued

Lady Alton, "you are quite silent! Has Miss Mordaunt no share in your esteem, as well as in that of your sisters?"—"O yes, mamma, but I cannot pretend that I am enraptured with her as are Maria and Teresa. I do not observe in her all the perfections that Maria does; and as for Terry, she likes any one that will indulge and pet her. Miss Mordaunt, though Maria's favorite, is too sedate and consequential for me; and as every body else loves her, she can easily dispense with my affection."—"Excuse, Miss Mordaunt, Fanny's bluntness," said Lady Alton, hurt at the rudeness of her daughter; "I fear you have already but too frequently felt its effects. I am not a stranger to her faults, amongst which I am sorry to notice jealousy as a predominant one. But—"—"Dear mamma," interrupted Maria, fearful lest her sister should get into serious disgrace if the conversation was continued, "the dinner is cooling, and we are very hungry."—"Maria is anxious to turn the conversation, lest I should quarrel with Frances," observed Lady Alton with a smile; "but she need not fear; I am not at all disposed to break the peace with any of my youthful visitors, who will, I hope, do me the favor to eat a good dinner."—"Oh yes, mamma, never fear!" said the delighted Teresa, "I see there are some nice things, and I am very hungry."

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### CHAPTER III.

It is now time to introduce my readers to a nearer view of the family, with which they are as yet so slightly acquainted, and whose history forms the subject of this little work.

Sir William Alton, although possessed of a large estate in the north of England, seldom resided at the paternal mansion, and for the last twenty years was known among his tenantry only by name. Becoming his own master at an early age, in consequence of his father's death, the seeds of the pious education he had received were quickly destroyed by the bad companions he unfortunately selected. His principles of religion and morality were attacked and

laughed to scorn : his native bashfulness and modesty were ridiculed ; nor did those who undertook to rub off the rust (as it was termed), and fit him for the world, abandon their prey till they had made him ashamed of every quality becoming the Christian and the gentleman. In the society of the profligate he dissipated his fortune, and ruined his health.

After twenty years had rolled away, and left behind them no recollections on which the memory could dwell with pleasure ; satiated with what the world calls amusements, which, because too frequently repeated, had lost their power to please, and touched by remorse at the review of his past life, he thought seriously of making some endeavor to amend it. To effect this important object, he resolved, after a few months' consideration, to give up his establishment in London, and retire to his deserted paternal mansion.

Not having informed the steward of his intended visit, no preparations could be made for his reception ; and on his arrival at the Park he found the house in so dilapidated a state, for want of timely repairs, that he was obliged to take up his residence at a small inn in the village, until a room could be prepared for him. The once beautiful gardens were covered with weeds and briars, and the extensive park turned into pasture. The scattered cottages and their appendages, even the village itself, bore marks of desolation and decay : though the inhabitants were, for their own comfort, obliged to secure their dwellings from the inclemency of the weather, yet they repaired no dilapidations but from absolute necessity. As one tenant, allured by a brighter prospect, quitted, or another was removed by death, no one could be found to supply his place, unless Sir William would consent to repair the dwelling. But Sir William would do nothing ; his rents were expended before they became due, and he could spare no money for reparations. The land was let, in large parcels, to wealthy farmers ; but as they felt no inclination to improve another person's estate, further than as it suited their own interest, they left the care of the cottages to the ever changing inhabitants, and employed all their thoughts on the culture of the land. The steward had often proposed to Sir William to let the mansion-house and gardens to a gentleman who, whilst they were in repair, had made application to that effect ; but he refused, under the idea, that he should

pass the shooting season there himself. However, season after season rolled on, till at length twenty years insensibly stole away, without his having visited his estate more than twice ; and he now viewed with regret the ravages that had been produced by time and neglect. Sir William, on his arrival, being unattended by any servant, did not make himself immediately known. Dissipation and sickness, together with increasing years (though he was not yet fifty), had so changed him from what he was, that, almost certain of not being recognized, he strolled into the park to examine the premises. He now felt a pleasure, for many years unknown to him, in contemplating the place of his birth ; in recalling to mind the remembrance of his amiable parents, and the happy days of youth, when, innocent and free from care, he used to roam over the spacious domain, and amuse himself with the sports suited to his age.

He at that time was happy, because he was virtuous. Religion and piety guided his actions, and with unfeigned devotion he offered up his prayers to that God whom he had long since ceased to adore, but to whose bosom he now again earnestly wished to return. Absorbed in these reflections, he walked on till he reached that wing of the house which was appropriated for the chapel and the use of the chaplain. He tried to open the door, but it was locked. Oppressed in mind, and fatigued in body, he looked around for a seat ; and perceiving one at a short distance, occupied by a venerable looking old man, went towards it. At his approach, the old man arose and offered his seat.—“ Here is room enough for us both, my friend,” said Sir William, “ I beg I may not disturb you. I was trying to open a door that seems to lead into a chapel ; but from appearance, I should judge it has not been opened many years.” “ Ah !” said the old man with a sigh, “ it is more than fifteen years since our good pastor died ; and from the time of his burial, I’ll be bound no creature has entered it, except it be rats and birds, and of them I warrant there’s a large congregation.”

“ Are there many Catholics in this neighborhood ?”—“ There were, your honor, some twenty years ago, but they are sadly fallen off at present. We have had no priest here so long, that the children have been neglected, and as they grew up without much regard for their religion,

many of our young people have married Protestants, and their children are nothing at all. Some, even, are not christened." Sir William's conscience smote him.

"There is," he resumed, "a good chapel, as I have been informed, about five miles off, and——"—"Five miles, good sir? Yes, that may do well enough for those who keep a carriage, or a horse; but it is a long way for poor people, who must trudge it, let the weather be what it will. And the poor children, your honor; why 'tis a day's journey there and back."—"But poor people in the country, my friend, are accustomed to walking, and the richer sort have a horse and a market cart; they are not, therefore, to be entirely excused for neglecting their duties, although there has been no priest here for some years. If it were a question of a fair, or a horse-race, I have no doubt that they would easily find the means of going."

"Yes, that I verily believe; but to go to church every Sunday five miles, when we ought to have a chapel in the village, is really a great hardship to our wives and little ones; while the fair or the horse-race does not come more than twice or thrice a year, and then the pleasure repays the toil. But to walk four or five miles to a gentleman's house on a cold wet morning, and not have a bit of fire to warm you, or dry your clothes—and if you are fasting, to return the same—is enough to cool the fervor of such weak mortals as we are, who at best often want something to spur us on to serve our heavenly Master, about whom, because he is so patient and long suffering, we are apt to think but too little."

"Very true," returned Sir William, who felt a truth he was not willing to acknowledge; "but, as you remark that there is a pleasure in going to a fair or a horse-race which repays the toil, I suppose you mean to infer, that in the service of God there is no pleasure, unless accompanied with ease and plenty of good cheer."

"I mean no such thing," replied the old man, rather indignantly. "But I have not lived all these years in the world, nor you either, I believe, without remarking, how much more attention is paid to the body than to the soul: and that if some few are willing to serve God for his own sake, the greater part of mankind must be attracted to his service by sweetmeats." He paused for a moment, and then continued; "Yes, your honor, there is a pleasure in the service of



God, an exquisite pleasure to the poor man who endeavors to serve him ; a pleasure to which the great ones of the earth, with all their splendor, perhaps are strangers. 'The Lord who made us is particularly the God of the poor ; well does he know how to recompense us for our poverty ; nay, even to make us love it. I have acquaintance with some in the village who for years have never failed, hail, rain, or sunshine, to present themselves every Sunday and holiday at the table of the Lord ; and I am sure they would have foregone a thousand advantages, had they been offered, rather than be deprived of this happiness, so sweet is the Lord to those who love him. Yet these poor men have been suffered to return at all seasons without being offered the least refreshment."

"Well, and were those who lived at a distance any better off when your chapel was open here ?" asked Sir William, willing to prolong a conversation in which he felt interested. "Better off, sir ! you must be a stranger indeed in these parts not to have heard of Sir William Alton ! Yes ; no one came to his chapel from a distance, and went away unrefreshed ; no one went to his duty, who had not a good breakfast provided for him."

"But, my friend, if there were a large congregation, a gentleman need have an immense fortune to do all this and provide for his family."—"The late Sir William, sir, had a noble fortune, and he made a princely use of it. His gates were never closed against the poor, nor his bread denied to the hungry. He was idolized in this village ; not a creature would have hurt a single thing belonging to him, nor have suffered another to do it unpunished, so much was he respected. Nor did his abundant charity make him the poorer ; for our divine Lord has said, that what is given to the poor shall be considered as lent to him, and that he will repay it a hundred fold : and truly my good master found it so."

"Was he old when he died ?" asked Sir William, affected at the recollection of his father's virtues.—"Ah no ! why did I call him old ? He was but in the prime of life—cut off like a flower in the midst of his days ! rich in good works, and ripe for heaven. If all our nobles were like him, how respectable and how revered would greatness be !"—"Sir William has left in you, old man, an able panegyrist."—"Nor am I the only one," said the old man, as

he wiped away the starting tear. "Though it is twenty years or more since his death, he still lives in the memory of us all; and we take pleasure in relating his virtues to our children and grandchildren."

"And his lady? he was married, was he not?"—"His lady," resumed the old man; "Oh what a lady! an angel if ever there was one on earth. Beautiful in person, but incomparably more in mind. Such humility! such sweetness of disposition! No one ever saw her out of temper she was idolized by my master, and by all who knew her. She was truly the good woman spoken of in the gospel, whose price is from afar. She governed her house with the greatest exactitude, yet with much indulgence; though so perfect in herself, she made abundant allowance for the failings of others. The poor she considered as her children, and was never so happy as when she was doing them some kind office. No one ever applied to her in vain for relief; yet she knew how to discern the industrious poor from the idle beggar. How many times have I driven her in the winter, when the snow was half up the carriage wheels, to visit some poor sick person in the village, who, she thought, might suffer from the severity of the weather, or want in some way her assistance. God reward her!—we shall never see her like again: we were not worthy to keep such a treasure. As she lived like a saint, she died the death of the just. Not a dry eye was seen in the village for many a day, and her funeral was attended by a concourse of people that kings might envy."

Here by chance the old man looked up at his attentive auditor, and perceived with surprise his face bedewed with tears.—"I distress you, sir. Pardon an old man, who, when he gets on this subject, never knows where to stop. You look ill; I fear I have tired you. If you are a stranger here, and will condescend to come to my poor cottage, which I owe to the bounty of the late Sir William, you can rest more at your ease."

"Thank you, my good friend, I am better now; and if it is not troublesome, allow me to ask you whether the late Sir William did not leave a son? I think you have not mentioned him."—"Look," resumed the old man with a sigh, "at that mansion—see its state of desolation, its mouldering walls and broken windows; they will tell you what I would fain conceal."

"Is he then also dead?"—"To us he is. He does not fancy a country life, and passes the chief of his time in London, or abroad."

"What sort of a character does he bear? I suppose he does not much resemble his parents."—"Excuse me, sir, I have kept you long enough; I will go now and endeavor to procure the key, if you still wish to see the chapel."

"Not so fast, good friend," said Sir William, holding him by the arm, desirous to know what was the general opinion concerning himself. "As you say so little about the present baronet, his conduct, I suppose, does not please you."

"If, sir, you have lived at all in the fashionable world, you cannot be quite a stranger to Sir William Alton."—"I know enough of him," resumed Sir William, "to think him the worst of men."

"Then why ask my sentiments? It is always a painful thought to me, that he has for so long a time forgotten the excellent precepts of his respected parents. Happily for them, they have not lived to see it."

"Have you heard," asked Sir William, "that he has sold his house in town, given up his establishment there, and gone no one knows whither?"—"I did hear it, and I am not sorry," said the old man, again relapsing into silence.

Sir William was disappointed. He wished to know the opinion of a man whose interesting appearance preposessed him in his favor, and whose veneration for his parents seemed to endear him to his heart.

"You were a while ago, my friend, so loquacious that I could scarce get in a word; you are now so taciturn that I cannot draw a sentence from you. Are you fearful I should repeat your conversation? Worthless as he is, he will not injure you."

The old man, unconscious of Sir William's design, looked at him with astonishment, and replied, "An old man like me, whose days are almost at their close, can have but little to fear from power or resentment; but Christian charity forbids me to blazon and proclaim the faults of any one, much less those of Sir William, whom I respect as the son of my revered master, and still love in spite of his faults. Ah! how often have these aged hands been raised to heaven in supplication! nor do I entirely despair

of his return to virtue. Almighty God will not, I trust, leave to perish eternally the son of such virtuous parents."

"Should you know him if you were to see him again?" asked Sir William, much affected.

"I think I should, if he at all resemble his former self; but I have not seen him since a few days after the funeral of her ladyship. His friends persuaded him to go abroad to divert his mind, for he took the death of his parents very much to heart. He was then just turned one-and-twenty, about your height, but fair complexioned and with a fine color. I am told, however, he is much altered."—"What was his disposition when a boy?"—"Amiable; his heart was the seat of every virtue. I knew him from his infancy, and took delight in amusing him; little did I think the recollection of him would ever have given me so much pain. But such is the will of God; they are well kept who are supported by his divine grace, and those who stand know not how soon they may fall; for we are poor, weak mortals, subject to continual changes."

"I see your partiality makes you still willing to excuse his faults."

"Yes, sir," rejoined the old man, "the world condemns him enough; I need not add any thing to its censures."

"The world, my good friend," said Sir William, seizing the hand of his companion, impatient to discover himself, "does not condemn him more severely than he now condemns himself. Look up, and examine if there are no traces left in me of William Alton."—"Sir William Alton, impossible!"—"Not at all impossible, my good old Joseph, for so I just now recollect you were called; I am, indeed, the worthless son of your lamented master. The prayers you have so charitably offered for me at the shrine of mercy will not, I hope, be always fruitless; continue them still, and be henceforth my friend and monitor."

"Is it a reality?" exclaimed Joseph; "am I in my senses? is it possible, then, that I have been talking to Sir William? that my eyes are permitted to behold, my aged arms to embrace my long-lamented master? for so permit me to call you." Joseph, unable to recover from his surprise, pressed with paternal warmth the hand of Sir William to his affectionate heart, and bathed it with his tears; then raising his eyes to heaven, "My God!" he exclaimed, "have I lived to see this day? How shall I express my

gratitude? To see Sir William is a pleasure; but to see him returned to himself, to virtue, to thee, is a happiness I do not deserve!" Then turning to Sir William, he continued, "Oh, my dear master, this joy is more oppressive to my poor heart than all that I have suffered. Excuse an old man's tears, pardon the freedom of my expressions; I hope I have not offended by them; I did not know to whom I was speaking."

"Fear not that you have given offence; your sentiments do you honor. I wished to hear the truth, and was, therefore, unwilling to discover myself; but when should I have met with another that would have spoken of me in terms so gentle? I did not at all recognize you, till you spoke of yourself as coachman. I rejoice that I have found one honest, virtuous man, in whom I may confide; for I had begun to mistrust all mankind, and almost to think that virtue was merely a name. But why did you say you were not sorry I had been obliged to give up my establishment, and become a wanderer? Was this sentiment in unison with the affection you expressed?"—"It was, because I was in hopes it would make you reflect, and look into yourself. I never could forget you had at stake an immortal soul."

"And I," replied Sir William, "who was the only one concerned, for years entirely forgot it. It is to sickness, to afflictions, to disappointments, that I am indebted for more serious thoughts."—"Ah! rather say to the infinite mercy of God," resumed Joseph, "who sent those crosses, as so many tokens of his love, to wean you from the world, and make you think of him."

"You are right, it is to the goodness of God I am entirely indebted; but I have forgotten the language of piety. Twenty years' negligence has almost obliterated every thing serious from my mind."—"Will you permit me, Sir William," interrupted Joseph, "to announce your arrival in the village?"

"Not to-day, good Joseph, I feel myself too ill; I must return to the inn: perhaps after a little repose I may be better. If you have leisure, come and pass the evening with me, and we will consider what is needful to be done." Saying this, he parted with Joseph and returned to the house in which he had passed the night.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE respectable Joseph Berry, at the age of seventy, seemed to have regained new strength and vigor, through the joy he felt at the return of Sir William. He had lived thirty years as coachman to his father, and by his undeviating good conduct, obtained the respect and esteem of all the family. At the death of his lamented master, he found himself possessed of an income of fifty pounds a year. While Lady Alton lived, he at her request retained his place; but at her death hired a small cottage in the neighborhood, and employed himself in every exercise of charity that came within his sphere. He had learned in his childhood to read and write; and being of a serious disposition, he afterwards by study improved his naturally good talents. His virtue raised him above the common level, while his humility made him consider himself as the servant of all. His amiable qualities increased with his years; and his placid, beneficent countenance expressed the serenity and peace of his soul. Beloved by the good, feared by the wicked, respected by all, he was looked up to as an oracle of wisdom in the village; and as there was no priest, he was often consulted in conscientious doubts, and generally appealed to in all civil contentions and disputes.

How amiable is virtue! how powerful its force! It elevates its possessor, whatever may be his rank in society, far above his compeers, and makes the unlettered peasant infinitely more estimable than the learned, opulent and titled great. Why then, ye poor, do ye not cultivate this precious plant, which, if carefully nurtured, will send forth branches sufficient to shelter you from those innumerable evils which are generally entailed upon you by vice?

The truly virtuous man can never be miserable, never entirely subdued, however beaten by the storms of adversity. If poverty, cold or hunger assail him, he considers that his divine Redeemer suffered the same afflictions for his sake, and to set him an example. In imitation, therefore, of his amiable model, he bears them with patience and resignation, trusting in the aid of the Most High, confident that he will not permit him to be tempted above his strength, but will send him aid in seasonable time. Virtue

does not defend us from human afflictions and sufferings; but it supports, encourages and comforts us under them.

At the time appointed, Joseph repaired to the inn, to pass the evening with Sir William, whom he found laboring under great debility of body, but still greater depression of mind. "I have thought the hours long, Mr. Berry, since I parted from you," said Sir William, on the entrance of his expected guest; "the sight of my dilapidated mansion and miserable cottages, so disgraceful to a gentleman, together with the conversation that passed between us, has left an impression on my mind which seems to overwhelm me. What can I do to repair the injury my negligence has caused? Speak freely your sentiments, my good Joseph; you are competent to reflect and act—I can do neither."

"Take courage, my good master," answered the commiserating Joseph; "all will yet be well. Workmen can easily repair the dilapidations which time and neglect have occasioned; and your present resolution of living in the midst of your people will soon make them forget the sorrows they have endured in consequence of your long absence. Permit me, to-morrow morning, to announce your arrival, with your intention of residing here, and joy and happiness will be diffused amongst them. Your health, I hope, will be restored by country air, and you will then begin to enjoy, in your own person, that happiness which you contribute to bestow on others."

"Never! my dear friend; the innocent and upright of heart may talk of peace, but for the sinner there is nothing but remorse and misery. External injuries may, by speedy remedies, easily be alleviated; but the maladies of the soul are of so corrosive a nature, that there seems to be for them no hope of cure."

"Oh say not so, my dear Sir William. It is true that they require the aid of a divine Physician, but such a one is ever ready to assist you in the person of Jesus Christ. Take courage, therefore, and apply to him for aid; it is not yet too late; they who were called at the eleventh hour received the same reward as those who had borne the burthen of the day."

"Yes," resumed Sir William; "but if I remember right, those who were sent into the vineyard at the eleventh hour said, in extenuation of their idleness, that no man

had hired them. I have not the same excuse to plead. I was early called to the service of God ; but I abandoned it to serve the world, to indulge my passions, to live without restraint ; and severely do I feel the consequences. I have lost my health, my repose, my happiness ! for truly there is no peace for the wicked."

"And fortunate it is for them," replied Joseph, "when their conscience is thus importunate ; for there is then a chance that they may look into themselves, and seek a remedy ; whereas if they enjoyed interior repose, they would feel perfect security, and die as they had lived. It is, therefore, a certain mark of the love and mercy of God towards us, when he is pleased to reproach us by the voice of conscience, and force us, as it were, to seek our happiness in him, where alone it is to be found. 'As I live,' saith the Lord, 'I will not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.' Attend, then, dear sir, to the monitor within you ; think her not importunate, stifle not her voice ; listen to her dictates, and you will, I trust, soon recover the peace and the health you have lost."

"The latter, my friend, I never can regain ; the seeds of death have already taken root too deeply to be eradicated, and for the former I dare scarcely hope. How can I ever satisfy the infinite justice of Almighty God, which I have so repeatedly provoked by my multiplied offences?"

"Expect every thing," resumed Joseph, "from his tender mercy ; only make the first advances, and, like the father of the prodigal son, he will run with open arms to you, press you to his bosom, support your trembling steps, dry your tears, and bid his angels rejoice at your return."

"Your words, my good Joseph, are calculated to give me encouragement and confidence ; but they flow from a heart unsullied by crimes, unacquainted with guilt. *You* have every thing to hope from the mercy of God, *I* every thing to fear from his justice."

"Ah ! why will you dwell on the justice rather than on the mercy of God, which is above all his works ? Can he cast off from him for ever a penitent soul that has been redeemed at the dear price of the passion and death of his only Son ? Can he be insensible to the reiterated cries of a feeble worm of the earth, who desires to return to his service, and supplicates for mercy through the sufferings of our divine Redeemer ? No ; we have in Jesus Christ so



powerful a Mediator, that whatever we ask in his name with proper dispositions, we shall be sure to obtain. The eternal Father cannot refuse any thing to his adorable Son, and the loving heart of Jesus so compassionates the creature he has redeemed, is so desirous of our salvation, that he is ever ready to pardon our sins, to receive us into favor, and to offer to the offended justice of God his own infinite merits, as an equivalent for our inability to make him satisfaction. Throw yourself, then, with confidence into the merciful and extended arms of Jesus Christ crucified, and be assured, that though you return to the path of virtue at the ninth, or even the eleventh hour, you will meet a gracious reception."

"You flatter me with hopes when I merit only reproaches."

"You have become your own accuser," resumed Joseph, "and, therefore, you need not reproofs to excite you to repentance. Neither will our compassionate Redeemer reproach you, for he has promised, that when we repent of our transgressions, he will pardon them, and blot them out of his remembrance. Nay more, he will smooth the way for your return, and will remove, by his divine grace, the thorns and briers with which the devil will perpetually labor to impede your advancement in the path of salvation. Be of good courage; begin without delay, and let the change be from the right hand of the Most High. You have violated the commandments of the Lord; take up now with willingness his yoke. You have trampled on the precepts of his church; resolve henceforward to observe them. You have neglected, perhaps abused or ridiculed, the sacraments; apply yourself with diligence worthily to approach them."

"That will be an arduous undertaking!" sighed Sir William, "after twenty years of negligence."

"The grace of God," resumed Joseph, "is sufficient for all things. Implore the light of the Holy Ghost, to enable you to discover the inmost recesses of your soul, and note down your principal faults. Speedily set about fulfilling the demands of justice. If you have not paid your debts, make arrangements for the discharge of them. If you have injured any, make restitution to the utmost of your power. When you have undergone this necessary preparation for the sacrament of penance, endeavor to find some zealous

and enlightened minister of God, in whom you may feel disposed to place your confidence."

"I have such a one in view," replied Sir William, "and expect him in a fortnight; in the mean time I will endeavor to profit by your good advice."—"Ah, Sir William! it is nor for a poor old man like me to presume to become your monitor."—"But you have already taken upon you that office," said Sir William with a smile, "and I will not discharge you from it."

"I have, indeed," replied Joseph, "been insensibly led further than I had intended. My not knowing you at first induced me to speak my sentiments more freely than I should otherwise have ventured to do; and the subject introduced this evening has been so interesting to my feelings, that it has carried me, I fear, beyond the bounds of the respect I owe you, and made me forgetful of my inferiority and ignorance."

"Speak not of inferiority; speak not of ignorance; your virtue renders you infinitely my superior in the sight of God, and all good men; and your knowledge in the science of salvation makes mere human learning sink into nothingness before it." These flattering expressions of the penitent baronet alarmed the humility of Joseph Berry, and filled him with confusion. Throwing himself suddenly at the feet of Sir William, he implored him, as he valued the peace of his few remaining days, not to distress him again with such language, and never to consider old Joseph in any other light than that of a faithful but useless servant.

Sir William hastily raised him from the ground, assured him that he would for the present say no more on that subject, but talk of other things which he wished him to do; "And first, I request," said Sir William, "you will go in the morning to my house, and inform the steward of my arrival. Inquire in the village who are in want of work, that I may employ them in the gardens, or where they are requisite; send for a carpenter and other tradesmen, and I will endeavor to repair the damage I have caused." Joseph, well pleased with his commission, after a little more conversation on the subject, wished the baronet a good night, and retired to his humble, but neat and peaceful cottage.

## CHAPTER V.

THE news of Sir William Alton's arrival at his paternal seat was soon spread abroad; his tenants, with the surrounding peasantry, hastened to bid him welcome, and express their hopes that he was come to reside permanently at the Park. Sir William, moved by this testimony of affection, which he felt conscious that he did not deserve, replied by thanking them for their kind attention, and by declaring it to be his purpose to pass the short remainder of his life among them; promising to render them all the service in his power, in order to compensate for the inconveniences they might have suffered from his former neglects. He assured them that, in a fortnight, the chapel should be opened, and expressed a hope that they would be attentive to the instructions they would then receive, and be diligent in the performance of their religious duties. He promised to repair their cottages, and to employ all that wanted work.

Overcome with fatigue, he begged them to return to their respective homes, and gave them money to regale themselves with their families; as his mansion, he said, was too poor to afford them any refreshment. The delighted crowd then withdrew, calling down upon him a thousand blessings. Sir William, considering he had found a treasure of inestimable worth, in the pious and humble Joseph Berry, thought it no degradation to consult him on all occasions, and to undertake nothing without his advice. Nor had he cause to repent of his confidence.

He was equally fortunate in meeting with a priest of great zeal and piety, to take upon him the direction of his conscience, and also of such of the congregation as had yet religion enough left to place themselves under his pastoral care.

This respectable minister of Jesus Christ was a gentleman of mild, engaging manners; venerable for his virtues rather than for his years. His name, Morini, bespoke him not of English birth; but, by his long residence in this country, he became, as it were, naturalized. It was not without some regret that he left a congregation over which he had long presided, to take up his residence at Alton Park.

Here, however, his active zeal quickly found an ample field for exercise, and fully reconciled him to the at first unwelcome change.

Without delay, he informed himself (by the help of Joseph Berry) of all who had any claim to the title of Catholic; he sought their acquaintance, and availed himself of some favorable moment to speak to them on the importance of salvation. His mildness, his affable, condescending manners won their esteem; his uniform and unfeigned piety secured their respect. If he could not succeed with the parents in bringing them back immediately to the faith, he generally prevailed so far, at least, as to induce them to consent that their children should be instructed in the religion of their forefathers.

Like the good shepherd in the gospel, he sought with unwearied diligence his wandering sheep, and when they were found, earnestly pressed them to enter the fold. If they refused, he kept an attentive eye upon them, hoping that, in the hour of danger, they would claim his assistance, and return to the bosom of their tender mother the church. With edifying devotion he daily offered to the eternal Father, his adorable Son, in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, as a victim of propitiation for himself and his people, as the surest means of drawing down on himself and them the divine blessing and assistance. Anxious for the improvement and eternal welfare of the souls committed to his charge, he devoted all his time to the cultivation of his neglected vineyard. He preached with great zeal every Sunday and festival, and catechized the children, in so agreeable a manner, as at once to secure their attention and make them desirous of instruction. His charity induced him to become all to all, that he might gain all to Christ. Indulgent to the weaknesses and errors of others, he was severe only to himself; and in imitation of St. Paul, chastised his body by mortification and self-denial, lest, whilst he preached to others, he himself should become anathema.

More than a year quickly passed away in restoring things to some appearance of their former order, and much yet remained to be effected, when the increasing illness of Sir William spread alarm in the neighborhood. His exemplary conduct, his active charity, had obliterated in the minds of his dependents his former errors, and his life was

as earnestly desired by them as that of a tender father by his afflicted children. Heaven granted him a few months longer to their earnest prayers. He was able to appear among them again, he laid the foundation of two charity schools, and applied himself with new vigor of mind to make atonement to the heretofore insulted justice of Al mighty God, by his patience in suffering, profound humility, and unfeigned contrition. He wrote to Mr. Alton, his cousin, praying him to hasten his return, that he might personally solicit pardon for his former neglects, and for the scandal he must have given him. Mr. Alton made immediate preparations to leave France, where he had resided some years, but arrived in England only in time to receive the last adieu, and close the eyes of his expiring relative.

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## CHAPTER VI.

SIR JAMES ALTON, after the funeral obsequies of the late baronet had been performed, with all the respect due to his rank, sent for his family from France, which consisted of his lady and three daughters. Sir James and Lady Alton were both persons of distinguished piety, and worthy to be the possessors of an ample fortune. The inhabitants, therefore, of the neighborhood of Alton Park were not likely to be losers by the change of masters; but as they were strangers to the present baronet, they could not, for some time, cease to regret the former.

Six months had scarcely passed before Lady Alton was attacked with a lingering illness, which for more than a year baffled the skill of her physicians, and at length induced them to prescribe a warmer climate. Her daughters, and Miss Mordaunt, a young lady about fifteen, who by the death of her father had become a ward of Sir James's, were left at the Park under the tuition of a governess.

Mr. Mordaunt, a gentleman of very limited fortune, had resided several years in the neighborhood of Alton. He had been long a widower, and devoted the greater part of his time to the instruction of a beloved and only daughter. He lived in a respectable style, yet with the strictest econ-

omy, in the hope of securing a small independence for his darling child, as the whole of his income was derived from an annuity, which would cease at his death. His hopes were frustrated, when he had laid by about seven hundred pounds. Divine Providence had other intentions in view, and, after a short illness, put a period to his life, whilst he was yet in his prime, and might have expected to number many wished-for years.

On the first attack of his complaint, he entreated the physician to impart to him the probable result; and, finding it was likely to terminate fatally, he hastened to employ his few remaining hours in endeavoring to secure a friend for his disconsolate daughter. He had lived in so retired a manner as to have cultivated but a very limited acquaintance, and among them none were able to assist his child. The curate of the parish was a most respectable man, but he was poor and encumbered with a large family. He thought of Lady Alton, he knew her benevolent disposition, but they were nearly strangers to each other; besides, Lady Alton was very ill and could not be applied to. "Alas! my child," said Mr. Mordaunt, turning to his daughter, who never left his bedside, "where shall I find a protector for you when I am no more?"

"My dearest father, do not talk of leaving me; I never can meet with any one to supply your place; think not of me, but try to compose yourself; in a short time you will, I hope, be better."

"Never, my child, in this life. I would not have you cherish such a hope. Exert your fortitude, and bow with submission to the will of God; remember the lessons of virtue I have endeavored to teach you, and show in this trying moment that you have profited by them."

"Oh my father," said the afflicted girl, throwing her arms round his neck, and sobbing violently.—"Be comforted, my darling, put your trust in the mercy of God, he will be your support; he has promised to be the father of orphans; to his divine protection I commit you. Preserve your integrity; persevere in a virtuous course of life; and however the world may frown on you, in the Almighty you will ever find a friend." At this moment, so afflicting to both father and daughter, some one gently knocked at the door, and Joseph Berry entered. He had heard of Mr. Mordaunt's illness, and was come to see if he could be of

any service to Miss Mordaunt or her father. Mr. Berry; who had long been known and much respected by them, was, therefore, at this critical moment, a very welcome visitor. Mr. Mordaunt pressed his hand, and to his anxious inquiries after his health, replied, "I am not long for this world—but my child! my dear child! who shall protect her?"

"The God of heaven will protect the innocent," said the old man, tenderly wiping off the tears that inundated the face of the afflicted girl; "trust in him, my child."

"I confide her to his protection," said the father; "but still, in her young age and desolate situation, she will want earthly friends, and, in this unforeseen conjuncture, to whom can I apply? She has no relations."

"Make yourself easy, my dear friend," said Mr. Berry, "I pledge myself to become the protector of your daughter, if you can find no better; but a thought strikes me: I will endeavor to procure her a more beneficial one. Sir James Alton"—

"Ah! my dear sir, how can I, a stranger, venture to apply to him? Besides, he is a Catholic; he will, therefore, refuse to take charge of one who is of different principles. Ah! why," continued he, "are not all mankind of the same religion?"

"Why, indeed!" said Joseph. "I have often wished that the good Mr. Mordaunt and his amiable daughter were Catholics; but do not so wrong the generous nature of Sir James, as to suppose him bound by the narrow principles of religious prejudice. Besides, charity is the vital principle of the Catholic religion; without charity we can never please God, nor secure the enjoyment of heaven." Old Joseph then requested Mr. Mordaunt to compose his spirits, and endeavor to obtain a little rest, while he went in search of Sir James.

"Where is Sir James?" asked Joseph, as he hastily entered the hall.—"In his library," was the answer. Thither he immediately repaired, having free permission to apply to him on all occasions. He, in as few words as possible, stated the cause of his visit, and besought him in behalf of the friendless daughter of Mr. Mordaunt. Sir James, whose heart was feelingly alive to the miseries of the unfortunate, and whose purse was ever open to assist the distressed, needed not long the entreaties of the com-

passionate Joseph. A father himself, he sympathized in the anxiety of Mr. Mordaunt respecting the future welfare of his child; and, after informing Lady Alton of the circumstance, and obtaining her ready concurrence in this work of charity, he hastened with Joseph to the house.

On his introduction to Mr. Mordaunt, Sir James was somewhat surprised and shocked to see a man in the prime of life, and but little emaciated by sickness, in hourly expectation of his dissolution, in consequence of the rapid strides which mortification was making towards the vital parts. Sir James consoled the afflicted father by assurances of protection for his orphan child; promising on the part of Lady Alton, that she would be a mother to his daughter, as long as she should feel disposed to claim her maternal care.

"Enough," said Mr. Mordaunt, pressing the hand of Sir James fervently to his lips; "may the blessing of the God of heaven rest, here and hereafter, on you and your family; and may you, in the hour of distress, receive that comfort which you have afforded me. I am well acquainted with your amiable character, and rely confidently on your word; I am sure it is sacred. I am not a Catholic, but what I have seen of Catholics in this neighborhood, together with your benevolent conduct this day, has raised them high in my esteem. Yet may I dare ask one favor more of you? My daughter has been reared in the profession of the Protestant religion; will you promise me not to force her to change."

"Most readily," said Sir James. "Miss Mordaunt's principles shall be sacred; in the choice of religion she must ever consider herself a free agent; no one will constrain her to become a Catholic."

"I am satisfied," replied Mr. Mordaunt; "and should she desire to adopt your religion, of her own free will, she has my consent. I do not wish her, Sir James," he continued, "to become a burthen to you and your family. I have saved about £700, and have forwarded her education, with the view of qualifying her to get her bread respectably as a governess, should Divine Providence deprive her of my care before I had laid by enough to render her independent. The small sum I am enabled to leave her will, with economy, more than suffice for her board and education, till she



shall be of an age to provide for herself, as well as afford a trifling surplus for future exigences."

"The money you bequeath," replied Sir James, "shall be left to accumulate till she attains the age of twenty-one. I am in circumstances that will enable me to be her friend, without trespassing on her little property; she shall be educated with my daughters till of an age to comply with your wishes, and they will be proud to receive so amiable a companion." Mr. Mordaunt thanked Sir James with every expression that gratitude and paternal feeling could suggest, and hoped his beloved child would never give him cause to repent of his generosity.

He then addressed himself to his daughter, urging her to show her respect to his memory, by obedience, affection and gratitude to Sir James and Lady Alton, who had so kindly promised to become her future protectors; as also to the worthy Mr. Berry, who would ever advise her in all things for the best. The weeping girl could only articulate, "Oh! my father, who can ever supply your place? must I indeed lose you? I have, till now, entertained a hope that the Almighty would spare you to me yet a little longer; but——"

"Take courage, my child, and submit to the will of God; do not yield to this excess of sensibility; it distresses me exceedingly, and, if it be indulged, will unfit you for all the employments of life. Having now, my dear girl, provided for you, I must turn my thoughts upon myself. Sir James, farewell; I have trespassed long upon your time, but will now release you. Mr. Berry, perhaps you will stay awhile longer. I feel the last moment is fast approaching. Did you not send for the clergyman, my love, as I desired?" said he, addressing his daughter.

"I did, papa, and he answered that he would come as soon as he had dined: shall I send again?"

"Yes, do—yet no, he cannot come till he has dined; that may be too late. Mr. Berry, will you remain and say some prayers by me? The prayer of the virtuous man will reach the throne of the Most High, and move him to mercy." After joining Joseph in fervent prayer for ten minutes, with sentiments of great contrition, he suddenly interrupted him, and asked why so good a man as he had always considered him to be, should prefer the Catholic to any other religion, since salvation, in a church which he had

been taught to believe so full of errors, must be very doubtful.

"Have you," returned Joseph, "never had any doubts as to the certainty of salvation in yours?"

"Sometimes doubts have arisen in my mind, but I have not paid much attention to them; their recurring now has induced me to ask you this question."

"I have never had any doubt, not for a moment," said Joseph, with eagerness. "In the church to which I have the happiness to belong, there is certainty of salvation for those who die in a state of grace. I never had, I never can have, any doubts as to the Catholic church being that only church which Christ established. I feel a positive conviction of it, which nothing can ever shake. And, however the Catholic church may be misrepresented, abused and calumniated by her enemies, or neglected, or even abandoned, by her ungrateful children; she is still that church founded on a rock, which has the sacred promise of Christ, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her."

"That the Catholic church, in the first ages of Christianity," rejoined Mr. Mordaunt, "was the same which Christ established, I readily admit. I have always understood, that she afterwards fell into a multiplicity of errors, which quite deformed her, and robbed her of her primitive beauty."

"In that," replied Joseph, "you and thousands of others are grossly deceived by the misrepresentations of designing people. How could that church err which Christ himself took under his special guidance, and respecting which he promised, that his Holy Spirit should abide with her, and teach her all truth, even to the end of the world? Do you think the promises of the God of truth can ever be made void?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Mordaunt, "and if I could be assured that that which you call the Roman Catholic church is indeed the only one which Christ established, I would not for a moment hesitate to embrace her doctrine and profess myself a Catholic."—"That Christ, my dear friend, established but one church on earth is evident from St. Paul, who says, 'There is but one God, one faith, one baptism;' and, would it were possible! I could convey to you the same conviction I myself feel, that the Roman

Catholic church is that which Christ established by means of His apostles, and in defence of which they and innumerable martyrs of each sex, of every age, country and condition, joyfully shed their blood. The marks which designate her—but there is not, I fear, time to explain them now.”

“There is not indeed,” replied Mr. Mordaunt. “Do you think Mr. Morini will come to me if you send for him? Perhaps he can assist me. I desire to become a Catholic; God grant it may not be too late! Would that I had thought of this sooner, and listened to the admonitions which you, in concert with my own conscience, have often given me, to seek the truth while I had the power. Oh, my God! I embrace with my whole soul every article of the Catholic faith, and resolve to live and die in the same. Receive me, although at the eleventh hour.”

Joseph, quite delighted with the sentiments of Mr. Mordaunt, offered to go himself for the priest; the dying man, however, begged he would not leave him, but send some one to request his immediate attendance. A messenger was despatched. Mr. Morini was not at the Hall, being gone a few miles to administer the sacraments to a sick person. Sir James forwarded an express to hasten his return, which might be looked for in half an hour. “That will be too late,” said Mr. Mordaunt feebly, when he was informed of the circumstance; “all is over; nevertheless I will still hope in the mercy of God, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ.” He then called for his daughter (who had been prevailed upon to endeavor to take some rest), and again solicited Mr. Berry to help him to pray. The benevolent old man suggested to him acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition and confidence, in which he joined very fervently, till, his voice failing, he inarticulately blessed his daughter, and expired.

Joseph Berry consoled himself with the pious hope that, though Mr. Mordaunt had embraced the true faith at the hour of death, and even without being able to receive the assistance of the church, it would, nevertheless, in the sentiments of contrition in which he expired, be available to his salvation.

## CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Lady Alton was informed of the death of Mr. Mordaunt, she immediately ordered the carriage, and, as Mr. Morini was going to his house, requested he would prevail on Miss Mordaunt to return with her maid, whom she would send to conduct her to the Hall. In the mean time, Mr. Berry was employing his utmost eloquence to persuade the afflicted orphan to quit the dead body of her father, but in vain. Mr. Morini for a while succeeded no better, till at length reminding her of the obedience she owed to the commands of Lady Alton, he succeeded in rousing her, and she emphatically exclaimed, "Ah! 'tis now, indeed, I shall feel that I have lost a father! Why does that lady exert her authority so soon? I cannot, indeed I cannot quit him. Only allow me to remain till my dear father is buried, and then I will obey her in all things."

This, they told her, with great tenderness, was absolutely impossible, and she at length suffered herself to be led or rather borne to the carriage, where, overpowered by the acuteness of her feelings, on finding herself separated from all that was dear to her, she fell into a state of alarming insensibility. In this condition she remained for some time after she had been conveyed to the dressing-room of Lady Alton.

On coming to herself, the first words she understood were, "Oh, mamma, she is recovering—she opens her eyes—she will not die!" uttered in accents of tenderness and joy by Maria Alton, who had been watching with great anxiety beside the sofa on which the young stranger reclined. "There was no danger of her dying, my love," observed Lady Alton, "grief only had overpowered her exhausted frame; she will, I hope, with good nursing, soon recover her health; time and resignation will restore her peace of mind."—"I will be her nurse, mamma, with your permission," said Maria, "and do all I can to amuse and console her."

Miss Mordaunt, on recovering from the state of stupor into which she had been plunged by grief, looked around, and, perceiving that every object was strange, the certainty

of her father's death rushed upon her mind, and produced a violent flood of tears. Claspings her hands, she exclaimed, "Oh my dear father! it is indeed true that you are no more." Then rising suddenly, and throwing herself at the feet of Lady Alton, "Dear madam," said she, "refuse me not the only consolation left me, that of watching by the remains of my beloved father till he is laid in the grave; I cannot, indeed I cannot be separated from him till then. I will afterwards do all you require of me."

"My dear child," replied her ladyship, tenderly caressing her, "do not afflict me by asking that which I cannot possibly grant, and which, if granted, would not contribute to your happiness. Submit yourself to the unerring decrees of Almighty God, the wise Disposer of events, and without whose permission nothing happens. Commend yourself to his paternal care, and in his tender mercy he will give you comfort. Rely with confidence on my protection, and that of Sir James; we will endeavor to supply the place of the parents you have lost. Look upon my children as your sisters, my house as your home; for I feel already prepossessed in your favor. Let me now prevail on you to lie down; a few hours' sleep will refresh you."

Jane Mordaunt respectfully kissed the hand of Lady Alton (for she was too much overpowered to speak), and suffered herself to be passively led by the gentle Maria to the room appropriated for her, pleased with the hope of being left alone to indulge her grief. After the lapse of a week she began to revive a little; and though still pensive and unable to join in any amusement, she was calm and resigned, and by her engaging manners, secured an interest in the hearts of her amiable protectors, and most of their family. Maria Alton, from the first moment of Miss Mordaunt's entrance, attached herself to her, and ingeniously strove, by every means in her power, to dissipate her melancholy. Nor were her attentions thrown away upon an uncongenial soil, for she met with so grateful a return from the amiable orphan, as amply to repay her youthful solicitude.

The first trouble Miss Mordaunt experienced after she became an inmate of the Park, was in taking leave of Lady Alton and Sir James, who set off for Italy in less than three weeks from the time of her arrival. She was then placed under the care of the governess who, not being a lady of

much sensibility, looked upon her coolly, and as an additional burthen. The servants considered her as an intruder; and, with the exception of Miss Alton, Mr. Morini, and old Joseph, she did not seem to have a friend in the world. In their affection, however, she solaced herself for the indifference of others, and endeavored, by continual watchfulness over her conduct, not to deserve the reproaches of any one.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

FRANCES ALTON, who was jealous of her sister's attention to their new companion, and envious of her superior acquirements, seldom treated Miss Mordaunt with common civility, but embraced, with malignant pleasure, every opportunity of humbling and degrading her. Not that Frances was altogether of a bad disposition, or incapable of a generous action. She loved her parents and sisters affectionately, but herself still more, and feared that the residence of Jane Mordaunt amongst them would abstract from her dear self a portion of that regard which she considered as her due. Her jealousy also was particularly excited, when she found Miss Mordaunt so amiable and so well accomplished, as she was apprehensive, that those flattering compliments which had hitherto been paid to her, would now be transferred to Jane.

The education of the Misses Alton had been rather neglected on account of the illness of their mother, who, before that period, chiefly superintended it, but which for many months past had been intrusted to the care of a governess not quite equal to the task. Frances having a capacity much superior to that of her sister, had profited more by the lessons she had received in music, dancing and singing. In juvenile parties, therefore, she always experienced the most pointed attention, and being taller (though thirteen months younger) than Maria, was generally supposed to be the elder. This distinction gratified her youthful vanity, and, as she was very lively, gay and talkative, she proved for a time an amusing companion, and was consequently much noticed and caressed; while the

timid, less intrusive, but far more amiable and sensible Maria, was left in the back-ground, and passed unheeded, except by those who knew her intrinsic worth.

Exceedingly fond of her sister, Maria willingly allowed her all the praises she received, and never disputed with her about pre-eminence; for having a very humble opinion of herself, she thought that all the dangerous adulation which her sister received was really merited by her. Books, needlework, and all serious studies, were irksome to Frances. Having, however, a good memory, she read occasionally a few historical and geographical anecdotes, that she might appear to have paid attention to those necessary branches of a good education, and be enabled to shine in company by sometimes introducing them; not considering, that diffidence is the most becoming ornament of youth.

Maria, on the contrary, was fond of serious reading, and, for her age, was not averse to study; although, from being rather of an indolent turn of mind, she required a stimulus to action. She possessed a tolerable ear for music, but had not patience with her own defects; while the slowness of her progress, contrasted with the facility with which her sister acquired skill in the same science, damped her energy, and discouraged her from making any strenuous efforts.

For drawing, however, she had a decidedly superior talent; and because it was the favorite amusement of her mother, she applied to it with unwearied attention; and at thirteen years of age had made considerable progress in that delightful art. During the tedious illness of Lady Alton, it was Maria's highest gratification to pass all her leisure hours in the company of her mother, either reading for her amusement, or working with her for the poor, and listening to her instructive conversation. By these means she acquired a large stock of intellectual knowledge, and a maturity of judgment not common at her age.

As serious conversation did not suit Frances better than serious books, she paid to her mother but short though frequent visits, and had no sooner made her affectionate inquiries as to the health of her suffering parent, than her volatile and restless temper urged her to seek excuses to be gone in quest of other amusement. After caressing her mother, relating any little incident that had occurred since

her last visit, and turning over and looking at things which she had already seen fifty times, she gently stole towards the door to effect her escape. "What! off again, Frances?" would her ladyship sometimes exclaim. "Yes, mamma, if you please; Teresa wants me to play with her;" or, "I have forgotten to feed my birds; my plants want water." Her mother, knowing her dislike to remain long in the same place, when there was nothing new to engage her attention, smilingly bade her begone, or gave her occasionally a slight reprimand for her instability.

Teresa, the youngest child, was a lively, artless, interesting girl, the plaything and pet of every one; accustomed to have her own way, and impatient of control. At the departure of Lady Alton she was placed, for the first time, under the tuition of the governess. Teresa, who had not yet been accustomed to any heavier yoke than that of a favorite nurse, did not by any means relish the discipline of the school-room; and to be obliged to apply to book or work, except as humor or fancy led, was exceedingly displeasing to a child, hitherto habituated to command rather than to obey. The school-room and the governess became her aversion, and the too indulgent nurse, fearing lest the severity of the governess, and confinement to study, should injure the health of her darling, sought, by trifling excuses, to keep her in the nursery as much as possible. Things went on in this manner during the first six months of the absence of Lady Alton.

Miss Belton was uneasy, and acknowledged that she had adopted a wrong method with her little pupil at first, in employing coercive measures, when it would have been better to make use of attractives, and to strew the path of learning with flowers. Teresa, who was now six years old, knew little more than her letters, and would have remained an ignorant, refractory child, till the return of her disappointed parents, had not Miss Mordaunt, by pursuing a line of conduct quite opposite to that of the governess, succeeded in inducing her to apply to her lessons. She did not, however, make an offer of her services, until Teresa had exhausted the patience of every one else.

Miss Alton had taken her in hand, but though she was abundantly patient, she was too indolent to persevere, and too fond of Teresa to contradict her. Under such a preceptress, therefore, a playful, giddy child would not



acquire much knowledge, as a kiss or a supplicating look from Teresa was always sufficient to obtain a release from the irksome duty of study. Frances, seeing Maria could do nothing with the little idler, after a trial of two months, now begged to be permitted to exert her skill, not doubting that she should be more successful, as she did not intend to overlook any faults, nor yield to the entreaties of the nurse, as long as she should have the countenance of her governess.

Teresa was accordingly turned over to her new instructress, who began to exercise her authority in so magisterial a manner, as soon to excite opposition. Every day the young governess and her giddy pupil had violent quarrels; neither would yield to the other, till at last, for the sake of peace, and for fear of disuniting the two sisters, Miss Belton judged it advisable to compel her favorite Frances to give up the task. She complied with great reluctance, saying pettishly, that the little dunce might remain a dunce, if she liked, till mamma returned, or for ever, for what she cared, a little ungrateful child! "Nobody else had been able to make her learn any thing, and now—"—"Patience, my good sister," interrupted the gentle Maria, wishing to put an end to the dispute, and drawing the sobbing Teresa to her; "Teresa will not be always a dunce, I hope, nor yet ungrateful to you for your instructions. As she grows older, she will become better acquainted with the utility of learning, and be ashamed of being ignorant."

"I do not mean to be a dunce, I am sure," replied the little trifter; "but Frances is so cross, I do not like her to teach me: Miss Mordaunt shall."—"Miss Mordaunt shall not, I assure you," replied her governess angrily; "if neither I nor your sisters can do any thing with you, it is not likely Miss Jane can; so give me your books and go to the nursery, nor presume to return again to the school-room during the hours devoted to study.—When I write to your mamma, I shall make her acquainted with your perverse behavior."

Miss Mordaunt did not venture to offer her services after what had been said, but determined, nevertheless, to make an effort to smooth the path of learning to Teresa in an indirect manner, by taking advantage of those moments which that little girl delighted to pass alone with her, talking of her mamma, or begging her to dress her doll, or

mend her broken toys. In all her infant troubles, dear Jane (as she called Miss Mordaunt) was her consoler and confidant. To effect her purpose, Miss Mordaunt provided herself with a few story books embellished with colored prints, kept one of them always about her, and, with unwearied patience, seized the moments when Teresa was inclined to be amused with looking at the pictures. In three months she learned to read tolerably, and became so desirous of improvement, as to ask to be admitted again to the school-room before her mamma's return.

Great patience and unremitting perseverance are necessary to those whose business it is to teach the first elements of learning. The method that may be pursued advantageously with one child will not always succeed with another; the temper and inclination should be carefully observed, and the irksomeness of study be relieved as much as possible. Short lessons, with a lively manner in conveying instruction, so as to render it a subject of amusement, rather than a gloomy task, generally succeeds better than any other plan with very young beginners. Elder pupils require to be stimulated to exertion by the hope of reward, rather than the fear of punishment: the former acting as a far more powerful incentive to study than the latter. It also lightens the drudgery of application in so considerable a degree, as to enable children to overcome their natural indolence, and other difficulties apparently above their years.

Miss Belton, who had been recommended to Lady Alton as governess to her children, was not a person exactly calculated for that office, though her morals were irreproachable, and her accomplishments various. In exterior acquirements she had made great proficiency, but her knowledge rested here; and she only sought to convey to her youthful charge a practical acquaintance with those pleasing but superficial embellishments which she herself possessed. She neither labored to cultivate the minds of her pupils, nor to correct the errors of their hearts, further than as they proved an inconvenience to herself, by obstructing her desire of their improvement. She was not, indeed, qualified to communicate to their understanding that refined taste, nor to inspire their hearts with those noble sentiments, which became their elevated rank. Though the daughter of rather low parents in the metrop-

olis, she was, from the quickness of her capacity, considered a fit subject to be educated for a governess. Many pounds were, accordingly, expended in her instruction. Her hours were devoted to music, drawing, Italian, French, &c., and certainly she did credit to her masters. But diligent attention to these studies left little leisure to acquire those intellectual endowments which are requisite for the Christian education of youth; that solidity of judgment necessary to form the mind and morals of a new generation; and that patient watchfulness to seize the favorable opportunity of correcting the pupil, without alienating her affections.

But these rare qualities appear, in the present age, to be but little sought for, or even valued; yet, without them, how can parents expect to see their children grow up in sentiments of honor, probity and virtue? If they are indifferent in the choice of those to whom they confide the instruction of their children—if they are dazzled by the lustre of superficial, rather than real and solid accomplishments, it cannot be matter of surprise that they are so often disappointed. Our modern system of education can never furnish such governesses as the amiable and illustrious Fenelon requires, because too many things are expected of a young lady who is destined for that important office. Hence the more solid will always give place to the more brilliant attainments.

One female is now expected to concentrate in herself those different branches of knowledge, which formerly gave bread to a variety of instructors. "She must be able to teach without the help of masters," is the constant observation when inquiry is made for a governess. No wonder, then, that young ladies grow up so frivolous, vain and indolent! No wonder that there are so many Christians who disgrace their profession, through the neglect or ignorance of numberless duties attached to their condition in life, and for ignorance of which they will perhaps be called hereafter to a strict account.

## CHAPTER IX.

MISS BELTON, though desirous of the improvement of her pupils, possessed not the method which was necessary to facilitate her object : she succeeded only with one. By flattering the vanity and overlooking the foibles of her favorite Frances, she had the satisfaction of witnessing her rapid progress in the accomplishments of music, singing and dancing. To overcome the indolence and inapplication of Maria, she had recourse to frequent punishment. This, however, produced no good effect on a meek temper like hers, but served only to depress her spirits, and completely to damp her energies.

Maria required encouragement, and to be stimulated to exertion by assurances of success ; for her want of application proceeded neither from obstinacy nor indifference for learning, but from an idea that the task appointed her was always above her abilities. She readily perceived also the preference that Miss Belton showed to her sister ; and though she was too amiable and too fond of Frances to be meanly jealous of it, she, nevertheless, felt its effects, as it rendered her sister still more self-willed and domineering than she was before. Maria noticed, likewise, the disparity of judgment between her governess and her mamma, and consequently was little inclined to rely on the opinion, or adopt the sentiments of the former. She was, however, too well-bred, and too conscious of the obedience she owed to those whom her parents thought fit to intrust with their authority, to treat her otherwise than with the greatest respect and attention. In the society of Mr. Morini and Miss Mordaunt, and in the company of old Joseph (whom she used sportively to call her grandfather, and from whose pious discourse she reaped much spiritual instruction), Maria Alton forgot the troubles of the school-room, and recovered her habitual cheerfulness and serenity of temper.

In attaching herself so particularly to Jane Mordaunt, she was actuated by sentiments more elevated than mere human friendship. She aimed at her conversion, and did all in her power to make the Catholic religion appear amiable, whenever an opportunity presented itself of speaking on the subject. To this she was induced, as she after-

wards acknowledged, by noticing in her catechism a question in the ninth article of the Creed—"Why cannot a man be saved in any church or religion?" The answer struck her forcibly; and casting her eyes on Miss Mordaunt, she thought it a pity, that one whom she loved so much, should not be a member of the only church in which she could with certainty attain salvation; and from that time she applied herself to labor for her conversion.

With a prudence not to be expected from her years, she committed her design to the secrecy of her own bosom, and putting up her innocent prayers for the accomplishment of her wishes, waited patiently the result. She gave not the most distant hint of her intention to Miss Mordaunt, but frequently requested her, during the hours of recreation, to hear her repeat the catechism, or read aloud some amusing Catholic book, while she affected to be busy at work.

Five months had quickly passed away, during which time Miss Mordaunt, who had been educated by her father in the strictest principles of the Protestant religion, continued regular in her attendance at church, and could never be prevailed upon to enter the Catholic chapel during the hours of divine service. At length, however, feeling herself, one Sunday, rather indisposed, and the weather being wet and stormy, Miss Alton persuaded her not to leave the house, and carelessly remarked, that she might as well accompany her to the chapel.

Miss Mordaunt thinking, as many Protestants do, that it is better to go to a place of worship different from their own, than not to go at all, consented to the proposal, but added, good-humoredly, "You need not imagine that you will make a Catholic of me, for I consider my religion quite as good as yours."—"Certainly not," replied Maria. "your going once to chapel will not make you a Catholic; do not fear."

Miss Mordaunt was, however, more struck than she expected to be, by the solemn worship of the Catholic church, at which she had never before been present. The music, the singing, the ceremonies, and the apparent devotion of the congregation, impressed her with awe. She thought within herself, how much more imposing the divine service was, when performed in this manner, than that of the church she was accustomed to frequent. She felt sorry when it was over, and quitted the chapel with a

wish to return again, though, at the same time, with the determination never to become a Catholic.

But how inscrutable are the ways of divine Providence! how imperfectly is man acquainted with his own heart! Many have formed the same resolution, who at length, through the tender mercy of God, have been captivated in the bonds of faith, and have embraced, with all the fervor of their soul (from a perfect conviction of its truth), that doctrine which they had been taught from their infancy to despise and ridicule.

Protestants, and sectarians in general, are apt to complain of Catholics, for adorning their churches and altars; for the richness of their vestments, their candles, their flowers, and the number of their ceremonies. They charge them with paying more attention to the exterior pomp of their church service, than to the internal spirit which ought to accompany their homage to the divine Being.

An altar necessarily supposes a sacrifice, and the sacrifice must be composed of something offered as a holocaust to the Divinity. It was, therefore, the sincere and unaffected devotion of the primitive Christians, that induced them to adorn their churches and oratories, in honor of the adorable victim they presented to the living God; and succeeding generations have followed their example. For this custom, also, they had a precedent in the costly furniture and splendid ornaments of the Jewish temple, which was built and embellished under the immediate direction of God himself. The sacrifices of the old law were performed in the most solemn and impressive manner; why then pay less respect to that of the new covenant, since the victim offered so infinitely exceeds in value all those that preceded it, and of which they were but the representations or figures?

In answer to the accusation of seducing others into our communion, by our solemn and imposing ceremonies, it is sufficient to observe, that no one who differs from us in faith is obliged to enter our churches. It is curiosity that leads them thither, and thrice happy those who pay the forfeit, by finding themselves captivated in the bonds of the true faith. They ever after consider it an inestimable blessing, and return thanks unceasingly to that divine Providence which conducted their erring and uncertain steps into this secure harbor of eternal salvation.

Miss Mordaunt, on the following Sunday, went as usual to her own church, but was present at the service with a sort of inattention to which she had hitherto been a stranger. She looked around, and perceived no object to fix her eye, or recall her wandering thoughts. The service appeared to her unusually cold, and little calculated to excite sentiments of fervent devotion. She compared it with the office of the preceding Sunday, and her youthful mind naturally gave the preference to that which awakened her affections, and assisted her to raise her heart more easily to her Creator. She returned home depressed and uncomfortable, not daring to give utterance to her thoughts, lest she should be exhorted to become a Catholic. When she was alone, she perused with attention the catechism of the ancient church, and endeavored to compare the doctrines there inculcated with what she had heard ascribed to the Catholic religion.

She thus perceived, that it disavowed entirely the errors which were laid to its charge, and that many of its tenets were the same as those which are professed by Protestants themselves. Though better informed than most young persons at the age of fifteen, she was unable to satisfy herself on various points; and being, as is often the case in such circumstances, too timid to express her doubts, the anxiety they occasioned had a serious effect on her health, which made those to whom she was intrusted very uneasy. In the mean while it was observed, that she took every opportunity to frequent the chapel during divine service and the catechetical instructions, and that she sought excuses to absent herself from her own church.

Mr. Morini began to suspect the cause of this change in her behavior, and thought it would be advisable to endeavor to draw the secret from her, as the only means of restoring her to health and peace of mind. To effect this, he commissioned Miss Alton to question her on the subject as soon as a favorable opportunity should occur; trusting that her friendship for Maria would not allow her to withhold her confidence much longer. Maria joyfully undertook the delegated task, and, after a few days, effectually succeeded. Miss Mordaunt, unable to withstand the tender and reiterated solicitations of Maria to be made acquainted with the cause of her extreme dejection, burst into tears, and, hiding her face in the bosom of her affec-

tionate friend, ingenuously acknowledged the conflict which, for the last month, she had sustained within. This, she said, was produced by the desire she felt, on the one side, to embrace the Catholic faith, and the fear which assailed her, on the other, lest it should demand more of her than she could perform. She was further distracted by doubts, whether it would not be wrong to abandon the religion in which she had been brought up. She added, that all these considerations united, had deprived her of sleep, appetite and repose.

"But why did you not speak of this before, my dearest Jane?" said the delighted Maria, kissing her with more than sisterly affection. "We might have preserved you from much uneasiness, and I should not have been exposed to the affliction of seeing you suffer in your health, without being able to afford you any relief, or even to divine the cause of your illness."

"Often, my dear Maria," replied Jane, "have I been on the point of going to Mr. Morini to crave his assistance; twice I had nearly reached his room, when my courage failed me, and I dared not proceed. At other times, I resolved to open my mind to you, who so much deserved my confidence. I even felt that I was ungrateful to your solicitude in not doing so: yet a secret impulse always withheld me, and thus prolonged my misery. A thousand foolish thoughts and fears successively presented themselves, to deter me from declaring the change which had taken place in my religious opinions, particularly after having so often proclaimed, and confidently believed, that I never would become a Catholic. Now that you have forced the secret from me, my mind is relieved as from a heavy burthen. If those points which I do not sufficiently comprehend, can be explained to the satisfaction of my conscience, I will immediately embrace the Catholic faith, and I hope the Almighty will endow me with strength to perform all the duties that it requires."

"Mr. Morini will, I am sure, experience very great pleasure in affording you the instruction and help you stand in need of," said the delighted Maria, embracing anew the interesting Jane, to whom she felt herself now more tenderly attached than ever. Miss Mordaunt, relieved from the anxiety under which she had labored some weeks,



recovered her health with returning peace of mind, and was quickly enabled to resume her usual occupations.

The health of Lady Alton being in the mean while, considerably improved by the change of air, she ardently longed for the time when she and Sir James could be again united to their beloved family. Their letters, accordingly, at length announced to the inmates of the Park the period of their return, and their arrival was greeted with joy by every individual to whom they were known.

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## CHAPTER X.

As soon as Lady Alton had recovered from the fatigue of her journey, she began to inspect the improvement of her children. With this she was by no means satisfied. Frances had certainly made great progress in music, both vocal and instrumental; but whilst her ladyship applauded her diligence in these respects, she perceived, with extreme uneasiness, that in self-complacency, pride and impatience she had equally advanced. Maria had improved considerably in drawing; but the more useful branches of education had been neglected through indolence, her predominant failing. Very few visits had been paid to the charity school or to the cottagers, and very little work had been performed for the poor. The visible progress of the little Teresa, however, afforded her ladyship much gratification, and she did not fail to compliment the governess highly for her exertions in effecting it. Though this praise was not due to Miss Belton, she did not disavow it; but endeavored to exculpate herself from blame with regard to the others, by alleging the inapplication of Maria, and the natural impatience and petulance of Frances, which defects in their character she could not be reasonably expected to remove, in the short space of nine or ten months.

"I am aware that my children are not without faults," replied her ladyship. "Though a fond mother, I am not so partial as to be blind to their imperfections, or to blame those only who superintend their education. I am willing

to believe, that you have acted to the best of your knowledge. Girls of the age of Miss Alton and Frances require a person of experience over them—one who is well acquainted with the prevailing foibles of young people, penetrating enough quickly to read the dispositions of her pupils; and, when once she has laid down a good plan for the correction of their faults, so persevering as never to relax from it till she has succeeded in her benevolent design."

"Do you call it *benevolent*, mamma," said Frances, "to be always scolding, admonishing, and making one miserable by tyranny? I dare say Maria will not say so, for she has had enough of it already."

"I have not complained, Frances," said the gentle Maria. "Had I been more diligent, our governess would not have had occasion to punish me."—"But you are not mended by it," said the provoking Frances, regardless of the presence of Miss Belton, and thinking to deprecate a severe system of government, lest she herself should suffer materially by its adoption. "Tyranny, therefore, appears to me to be of no service, and I conceive that gentle methods would suit much better."

"They would suit your inclinations better, no doubt, Frances," said Lady Alton; "and the method you recommend seems to have been pursued with *you*, though not with your sister; yet your faults are not corrected by it."—"But I have not been indolent, mamma; I have practised my music three hours a day, and learned a great deal of history and geography."

"For the music I give you credit, my love, as that can be acquired only by your own industry; but with regard to the two latter studies, your knowledge is rather the result of a good memory and of others' labor than the recompense of your own application. But the faults of the heart, my child, are more reprehensible than those of the head."

Frances blushed, conscious of the truth of her mothers observations; but, recovering herself, she said, "How did you gain all this knowledge, mamma? You were absent nine months, and yet you seem to know every thing that has passed."

"Since I have had the happiness to be a mother," replied her ladyship, "I have made it my daily study to become

acquainted with the temper and dispositions of my children. This, added to the unreserved conversations in which I have been engaged with you since my return, has sufficiently apprized me of what has occurred during my absence; though, for fear of being told an untruth, I have not asked directly a single particular."

"We ought to have been more on our guard, mamma, in what we said, since it is likely to turn to our disadvantage."—"What, Frances! more reserved towards your mother, your most sincere and affectionate friend? Is she likely to turn your ingenuous conversations to your disadvantage? No, my child; you have very imperfect ideas of parental feeling, if you suppose that parents can ever take pleasure in the afflictions of their children. But the greatest, the strongest proof they can give of their love, is to use wholesome correction, and inflict temporary pain on those to whom nature has so tenderly attached them. This attachment is so powerful, that the parent who inflicts the punishment generally suffers more than the child who receives it."

"Dear mamma," said Maria, throwing her arms round her mother's neck, and affectionately embracing her, "I wish it were possible for me never to cause you this suffering."—"It affords me inexpressible pleasure to assure you, my dear Maria, that you seldom do so; and if you will endeavor to overcome this dangerous indolence of mind, which gives me some uneasiness, you will, I am persuaded, quickly become every thing I wish. You are not deficient in courage, my love; do, then, make an effort; implore the assistance of Almighty God; his divine grace can enable you to fulfil with ease all your obligations. You have now an imperative duty to undertake, the most important of your whole life, but, at the same time, the most delightful. The preparation for it requires no ordinary share of diligence. I allude to your first communion, which has been already too long delayed. In the hope that Frances would correct her faults, and that, as you are nearly of an age, you might perform this solemn act together, I have omitted to hasten it. Now, however, it shall depend upon yourself, and be the reward of your endeavors to overcome your predominant defect. Do you think the recompense worth the labor?"

"Oh, mamma! infinitely above it! How long, how

earnestly have I desired to make my first communion! I will indeed use great exertion to overcome my faults in order to accelerate the happy moment. Pray, dear mamma, ask Mr. Morini to begin without further delay to instruct me; when I request that favor of him, he always puts me off."

"But why does he put you off, my love?" inquired her ladyship; "can you not guess the reason?"—"Ah yes!" said Maria, with an ingenuous smile; "it is, I fear, because he is sensible that I am too imperfect."—"Endeavor, then, my dear child, to amend your faults, and he will no longer oppose your pious and laudable wish."

Before Lady Alton quitted England, Mr. Morini had proposed to her, that Maria and Frances should make their first communion, as he observed in the former every requisite disposition; but her ladyship particularly requested, that he would do her the favor to delay it until her return, should it please God to restore her to health, as she wished to join her endeavors to his, in order that they might better perform so important a duty.

The amiable ecclesiastic willingly yielded to her ladyship's desires, and expressed a wish, that all mothers would take an equal interest in what was so essential to the happiness of their children. He lamented to think, that the greater number of parents, in all ranks, give themselves so little concern about disposing their children to receive worthily this great sacrament, which, inasmuch as it is more excellent than all others, requires a longer and more careful preparation.

"Yet every thing," he added, "is left to the priest, though certainly very much depends on those with whom children reside; and it is to be feared, that parents, at the great accounting day, will be severely reprov'd for their culpable neglect of that, which they ought to have considered the most interesting of their duties."—But to return.

"Maria," said Lady Alton, after a moment's pause, "I will with much pleasure speak to Mr. Morini in your behalf; but I must request our mutual friend to second my designs, and"——

"And what, mamma?" said Maria, hastily interrupting the unfinished sentence, and fearing some new obstacle.—"Delay your communion one month," resumed her lady-

ship, "for every time I have occasion seriously to reprove you for indolence, and for neglecting to rise at the appointed hour, which, you know, is generally the source of all your faults."

"A month? Ah mamma!" said Maria, bursting into tears, "do not threaten me with so severe a punishment. I have often formed good resolutions, but you know too well how frequently I have broken them; the favor I desire will still be delayed from month to month."

"Do you not, then, mean to endeavor to conquer this, I may almost say, only fault?" continued Lady Alton, wiping the tears from her amiable child. "I will make an effort, mamma," said the afflicted girl, "but I fear I shall often fail, and then"——"Take courage, my child, every thing is possible to those who love. You love God; you desire to possess him in the adorable sacrament; persevere in your good resolutions; often renew them, and be assured that you will succeed. Dry your tears, love; we will resume this interesting conversation another day. I wish now to speak to Miss Belton alone; go, therefore, with your sisters, and amuse yourselves as you please."

Lady Alton now informed Miss Belton, in a delicate and feeling manner, that she was not exactly the person she required as the instructress of her children. She stated, that she wished to obtain the assistance of a lady who was older, and consequently more experienced; and that, until she could meet with such a one, she would take the superintendence of their education again on herself. Her ladyship then presented her with a handsome pocket-book, of which, she said, Sir James requested her acceptance, as it contained, besides the remuneration due for her services, a compensation for any inconvenience she might suffer by leaving them, before she was provided with another situation. The governess expressed her gratitude for this unexpected consideration, and her regret to leave the family, lamenting that she was not possessed of those abilities which her ladyship thought requisite, to enable her to enter exactly into her views for the education of her daughters. Lady Alton, and the young ladies, made her some presents, and in a week's time she quitted the Par

## CHAPTER XI.

LADY ALTON, left alone with her children, did not propose to take upon herself the office of governess for three weeks or a month, but to give them holidays during that time, in order that she might have leisure to observe minutely their natural inclinations (without, however, seeming to watch them), which, for the last eighteen months, she had not been able to do, on account of illness and absence from home. She proposed also to make inquiries for a new governess. For this purpose, she wrote the following letter to a lady, whom she begged to assist her in this important research.

“ I fear my dear friend will think me troublesome, capricious, and, at the same time, difficult to please, since, in less than eighteen months, I am again about to request her assistance, in procuring me a new instructress for my children. I allow you to suppose me particular in the choice of a governess. I certainly am so. But I trust you will consider this solicitude excusable in a mother who is anxious for the eternal, as well as the temporal welfare of her children ; both of which materially depend, in her judgment, on the person to whom their education is committed. My eldest child is now thirteen, the second twelve, the youngest only seven ; but in addition to these, there is an amiable girl of fifteen, a ward of Sir James’s. I wish, therefore, for a person of experience, on whose prudence, knowledge, tenderness and moral conduct I can implicitly rely, and to whose conscientious care I might safely trust my sacred charge, should illness or any unforeseen event oblige me to withdraw, for a time, my superintendence. I shall never control or interfere with her method of tuition, in the presence of my children, even should I disapprove of it ; but whatever alteration I may require, I should wish to proceed as from herself, and not appear to be the result of my dictation, lest it should weaken her authority. A governess ought ever to be looked upon by her pupils as the absolute mistress of the school-room ; and it will be my endeavor to inspire them with respect for her person, and with a high opinion of her superior knowledge. So much for the general outline ; now for particulars.

“ I am anxious to secure the services of a person not

younger than thirty, though I well know that wisdom is not to be measured by length of years, but by sedateness of disposition, and steadiness of application. You will also oblige me by endeavoring to meet with a lady of respectable family and connections; for how can those who are not accustomed to genteel society themselves undertake to polish the manners of others? There are but too many of the present generation educated in a manner far above their condition in society, and in a style to which their birth and connections give them no right to aspire. I should, therefore, be apprehensive, lest they might entertain ideas unbecoming the respectable rank to which they were called, and which might sometimes induce them to stoop to actions degrading to their situation.

“ I require a person of unaffected piety, well instructed in the theory, and faithfully practising the duties, of our holy religion, without being carried away either by indiscreet zeal, or uncharitable prejudice. Music and drawing I do not consider as indispensable requisites, though I should be better pleased, if she were able to superintend those studies in the absence of the masters. The English and French languages, history, geography, &c., are matters of course. I require her also to teach various kinds of needlework, for I do not approve of the modern system of education, which excludes this branch of useful knowledge; thereby exposing females to the danger of idleness, by leaving them in ignorance of an art which belongs exclusively to their sex. It is argued, that young ladies of fortune have no occasion for this vulgar accomplishment. This is surely an inconceivable folly! Besides, as man, by the condition of his nature, is condemned to labor, some way or other, and from which imperative command, no rank, however exalted, can dispense him; so ladies who are not under the obligation of working for themselves or their families, may be profitably and meritoriously employed, in preparing clothes and necessaries for the poor. Idleness in youth being the parent of every vice, I wish my children to be defended from it, by having a great variety of employment placed within their reach. One word more, my dear friend, and I have done. Introduce to my acquaintance, if possible, a lady who does not follow her profession merely as a means of providing for her subsistence, but one who prefers teaching to every other occupation;

who is capable of feeling a maternal interest in the advancement of her pupils ; not confining her exertions to the fixed hours of the school-room, when they are oftentimes disregarded, but ever on the watch to seize the favorable moment, when indirect instruction may produce a powerful effect, by not appearing in the form of a dictatorial lesson. A female who is distinguished by such qualifications, possessing a dignity of manners, necessary to command respect, joined with an affability, calculated to secure the love and confidence of her pupils, can never fail of succeeding to the utmost of her wishes, in the most important and praiseworthy of all the businesses of life—the virtuous education of youth. You will, perhaps, tell me, that the sort of person I describe, is but the creature of my own fantastic imagination, and not to be met with in real life. This, however, I cannot admit, though I am willing to allow, that the number may be small. Yet I hope one of these hidden gems may be discovered by diligent search, and by earnestly imploring the aid of Heaven. Use your endeavors, then, my dear friend, to assist in the attainment of an object which interests me so deeply. You perceive that I do not desire a multiplicity of *exterior* accomplishments, but abundant accomplishments of the mind and heart. I think it needless to trouble you with remarks on the subject of salary. Sir James is willing to pay what is just to all who engage in our employ ; nor do we consider it right, that those who devote their best years to the instruction of youth (which, under the most favorable circumstances, is a laborious occupation for the mind) should be expected to give their valuable services for so small a remuneration, as not to enable them to provide a decent support for the evening of their life. Adieu !”

After a sedulous inquiry and innumerable applications, the friend to whom her ladyship addressed herself, at length fixed on a person who was strongly recommended, and who appeared to be gifted with the peculiar talents which Lady Alton required. Miss Hargrave had been long in quest of a situation likely to be permanent. She had refused several, and quitted others after a short residence, because she was not fortunate enough to meet with parents, whose views, on the subject of education, were in accordance with her own. But as soon as she had read Lady Alton’s letter, she expressed a hope that she might



be engaged, as she thought it evinced a congeniality of disposition likely to prove agreeable and satisfactory to both. A few letters passed between them; the offer of Miss Hargrave's services was accepted, and it was understood that in the course of ten days she should proceed to the Park.

This period was anxiously looked for by the young ladies. Children are naturally desirous of change, unconscious whether or not it will contribute to their happiness. Frances and the little Teresa, however, contemplated the coming of the new governess with dismay and fear, as they had figured to themselves that her government would, with the approbation of their mamma, be extremely severe. The long-expected day at length arrived; and at nine in the evening the carriage, which had been sent to meet Miss Hargrave, drove to the door. As this was the hour at which the young ladies were accustomed to retire, they were only permitted to congratulate their governess on her arrival, and bid her good night at the same time, lest they should add to her fatigue.

Teresa, who usually went to bed an hour before her sisters, had petitioned earnestly, that she might be allowed to sit up to see her future preceptress, whom she represented to her infant imagination, as of the most repelling appearance, whose very look would inspire terror. Struck, therefore, with the pleasing, though not handsome face of Miss Hargrave, with the soft tone of her voice, and the cordial embrace she gave her, Teresa riveted her eyes rudely upon her, till checked by her mother, who happened to notice this behavior. To the gentle reprimand of her ladyship, she replied by exclaiming, "Dear mamma, I am so surprised!"—"At what, my love?"—"Why, to see this lady look so good-natured! I almost think I shall be able to love her!" replied Teresa, with her native frankness.—"I am sure you will; so dismiss your fears, my love, and go to bed."

The child obeyed; and Lady Alton, turning to Miss Hargrave, apologized for the bluntness of her little girl, who had pictured to herself something very terrible in the appearance of the new governess.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE following day, Lady Alton introduced her daughters severally to their new governess, describing their acquirements, their dispositions, and their predominant failings, with so much minuteness, as to convince Miss Hargrave, that nothing could escape the penetrating eye of this judicious mother. Lady Alton loved her children with the most tender affection; but it was directed by prudence, not blinded by passion—an affection which prompted her to sacrifice all personal feeling, when it was necessary to correct their faults, rather than, by misjudged indulgence, to overlook failings, which would hereafter expose them to misery or contempt.

She then introduced Miss Mordaunt as an orphan under her protection, and represented her as a very amiable young lady, whose education was to be finished with great care, in order to enable her, at a future period, to employ her talents in the benevolent office of instructing youth. “She is a new convert also, my dear madam,” continued Lady Alton; “I therefore recommend her, in a more especial manner, to your pious care, and I beg you to assist our good chaplain in preparing her for the sacraments, and smoothing, as much as possible, any difficulties that may occur.”

Miss Hargrave affectionately embraced her orphan charge, and promised to do all that depended on her, to contribute to her happiness and improvement.—“I am sure she will be grateful for your attention,” said her ladyship, “and endeavor to repay your trouble by assiduity and affection.”

“I hope, dear madam,” said Miss Mordaunt, respectfully taking the hand of Lady Alton and fervently pressing it to her lips, “that I shall never disgrace your flattering recommendation. You are more partial to me than I deserve; but it shall be my constant study to merit, in future your good opinion.”

Tears of sensibility and gratitude found their way to the eyes of the amiable Jane, and secured her an interest in the heart of Miss Hargrave, who was already prepossessed in her favor by the description of Lady Alton.

Frances, who, during the latter part of the conversation,

felt extremely jealous, and sensibly piqued, that her mother should have pointed out so minutely her faults and those of her sisters, without uttering a word which was calculated to make Miss Mordaunt appear less amiable, said, rather petulantly, "It is unkind, mamma, to tell this lady our faults: it would be time enough for her to know them, when she discovered them herself."

"And if I may judge by your countenance and tone of voice, Frances," said her ladyship, "it would not be long before she made the discovery. Why are you out of temper, my love, because I think it prudent to acquaint Miss Hargrave with the imperfections of your character, in order that she may be enabled to remove them? Do you conceive it would be advisable for a sick person to send for a physician, and then refuse to make known his complaints, leaving him to find them out even at the risk of life?"

"Surely not, ma'am; but I am not in danger of dying."—"Not at present of a corporal disease, thank God! but the diseases of the mind and heart are of a more malignant nature, more deeply seated, and more difficult of cure, than those of the body. They, therefore, require consummate skill in the physician, and that he should be thoroughly acquainted with all the circumstances of the distemper. How, otherwise, can he apply remedies likely to succeed, and effect a cure?"

"But you did not point out any of Jane Mordaunt's faults," said Frances, her countenance flushed with anger; "and I am sure she has enough. She is so proud and conceited, that she is always dictating to us what we are to do, and assuming as much consequence as if she were our equal. I wish from my heart she had never come here, for Maria has no attention or complaisance for any one but her. Even the little ungrateful Teresa, whom I have so often amused, now prefers her company to mine."

These expressions were uttered by Frances with such rapidity and passion, that nobody attempted to interrupt her, so greatly were they astonished.

At length Lady Alton exclaimed, "Oh jealousy! jealousy! what a baneful passion thou art! How miserable dost thou render the unfortunate being that is possessed by thee!"

Miss Mordaunt, overpowered by a multiplicity of feel-

ings, left the room to give vent to her tears. She had been repeatedly insulted by Frances, but had never resented her petulance, or made any complaints; because Frances, faulty as she was, was the sister of her dear Maria, the daughter of her benevolent protectors.

Frances had no sooner discharged her unprovoked anger, than she was conscious that she had done wrong, and would willingly have recalled the unguarded words. She wished to withdraw from the scrutinizing eyes of her offended parent, and astonished governess, which seemed to penetrate her soul; but she durst not move. Lady Alton, ever mistress of herself, directed Maria to follow Miss Mor-daunt; sent Teresa to the nursery; and then, with a countenance expressive of her displeasure, in a calm but dignified tone of voice, ordered the trembling culprit to stand before her. Frances obeyed, and stammered out, "Mamma, I did not mean to offend you."

"Offer no apologies for your conduct, Frances, for it will admit of none; tell me not that you had no design to offend, when you presumed to call in question my right to speak to your governess, on the subject of your faults. The emotions which then swelled your bosom, and excited you to anger, were those of pride and humbled self-love. You were angry that I, with a mother's lenient hand, should slightly sketch the outline of your failings, and you yourself have portrayed them in the strongest colors, even before the very person whose good opinion you were anxious to obtain. How fallen, how degraded must you now appear in your own eyes, as well as in the estimation of those who have been witnesses to your reprehensible conduct! Whence arose, my child, this misfortune? From the two faults I have just pointed out; faults, Frances, which, if not crushed in the bud, will render you miserable through life—pride and jealousy. The first awakened in your bosom sentiments of anger against me, because I exposed your failings, although I had, of course, no other motive for doing so, than a desire to ensure their correction. The second rendered you unjust towards others, by accusing them of faults of which they were not guilty; but jealousy observes every object with a jaundiced eye."—"I am not jealous, mamma, indeed I am not!" interrupted Frances.—"You are not willing to believe so, since it is a passion so degrading and contemptible; but examine your

heart, and account, if you are able, in any other manner, for the discontent and uneasiness which you feel, because your sisters are not exclusively devoted to you. Teresa is of an age to attach herself, for a time, to those who, in her opinion, treat her with the greatest kindness. You are cross and impatient with her, except at the moment when it suits your fancy to play, and it is consequently no wonder she prefers the company of those who are more gentle and indulgent. Again, where will you find a sister more affectionate than Maria? She, though the elder, always gives you the preference, excuses, and often conceals your faults, and pleads for you with the greatest earnestness, whenever you happen to fall under my displeasure. Yet this sister you accuse of want of feeling and affection towards you, because she has had the charity to notice, and endeavor to comfort, a fellow creature, sinking under the afflicting loss of a beloved and only parent. Affection is of a divisible nature. Maria does not love you less, because Miss Mordaunt shares her esteem. I am even happy to observe, that this esteem is ripening into friendship. Miss Mordaunt is an amiable girl; I do not perceive in her any seeds of vice; her temper is naturally hasty, but she makes the greatest efforts to check it, and keep it under control."

"But you did not say before her that she has a bad temper!" interrupted Frances.—"Do not mistake me, Frances. I did not say that Jane had a *bad* temper."—"But is not a hasty temper and a bad one the same thing?"—"No: they are widely different," rejoined her ladyship. "Had her temper been bad, she would not have submitted so quietly to the insults and provocations she has received from you. You have this day, and it is not the first time, behaved in a cruel and unfeeling manner to a young lady of great respectability, whom your father and I have thought fit to take under our protection, and who is, therefore, entitled to complaisance and civility from you. Being much older and more advanced in her studies than either your sister or yourself, her advice and opinion should be received with deference. As an orphan, and in part dependent, she is entitled to your compassion and kind regard; while, for her amiable and engaging deportment, she has the strongest claims on your affection. You have not considered these things, or you would have acted differently.

You have, I fear, yet to learn, that it is mean, contemptible, and unworthy of that greatness on which you pique yourself, to trample on and insult the child of misfortune. Go! unworthy daughter of Sir James Alton; indulge your pride and petulance in the solitude of your chamber. There, in the presence of your offended God, who on earth was a model of meekness and humility, reflect upon your conduct, and resolve to adopt sentiments more worthy of a Christian. I am rendered miserable by seeing you always at variance with those in whose society you are obliged to live. Do not again wound my feelings, by indulging emotions of mean jealousy. You are well aware that I make no difference between you; you are all equally beloved, equally dear; and it afflicts me more than I can express, to be obliged to punish."

Frances, who was by no means devoid of sensibility and affection, now burst into tears. "Dear mamma," she exclaimed, "pray forgive me; I will, indeed, try to behave better for the future, and not offend you again."—"On one condition only will I pardon you, which is, that you ask pardon of Miss Mordaunt for your ill-conduct towards her."—"Of Miss Mordaunt, mamma? of Jane?" replied the high-spirited Frances, the color in her cheeks heightening as she spoke. "Oh never! indeed I cannot."—"As you please," returned Lady Alton, calmly; "on no other terms do I restore you to favor. Therefore, keep your room till solitude and reflection have taught you humility."—"Pray, pray, mamma, excuse me, do not be so severe, I will submit to you, but—"—"Not another word," replied her mother; "you know the condition, and you know, also, that my decision, when once made, is irrevocable." Frances, perceiving that she had no alternative, slowly retired.

Lady Alton, fatigued with her exertions, and grieved to observe her second daughter so remote from her wishes, begged Miss Hargrave would endeavor to find amusement in looking over the grounds or house, and consider herself as entirely her own mistress during the remainder of the week, as she did not desire that the children's studies should commence, until she had become better acquainted with their characters and dispositions. Her ladyship then retired to her oratory, there, at the foot of the crucifix, to unbosom her grief, and entreat our divine Saviour to afford her light and grace to bring up her children in his holy

fear, and in such sentiments of virtue, as might enable them to attain the end for which they were created. She prayed that their conduct through life might always be so exemplary, as to contribute to his greater glory, and the edification of their neighbor. She desired not for them that transient beauty, which illness or accident might in a moment destroy, and which too often proves fatal to its possessor; but that beauty which adorns the soul, and emanates from innocence and virtue. While this admirable mother adopted all the precautions which were necessary to secure to her children an accomplished education, the first and most ardent wish of her heart was, to bring them up in the fear and love of God. To that end she instructed them, not only by precept, but also by example, well aware that the most salutary counsels of a parent make but little impression on the minds of youth, unless they be supported by virtuous example.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

FRANCES, left to herself, a prisoner in her own room, passed the first hour in tears, not of repentance but of passion. Becoming calm, however, by degrees, she began to reflect on her conduct, and had sense enough to feel that it had been highly culpable, although she was too proud to atone for her faults by making the required apology. To ask pardon of a rival; of an inferior, of a dependent on her father's bounty (as she was pleased to consider Miss Mordaunt), was more than she could brook; and she indignantly dismissed the thought, resolving to remain contented in her room for a week, rather than submit to such a humiliation. Wrapped up in her own fancied dignity, she endeavored to dissipate the uneasy suggestions of conscience, by amusing herself with needlework. But this sedentary employment failed to produce the desired effect; on the contrary, it served to encourage reflection, and multiply the conflicting emotions that tormented her. Her thread was continually breaking, or becoming entangled; and in less than half an hour all her working materials were tossed in a pet to the other side of the room. Her little library was then rumaged over, in search of an entertaining

book. A book was selected, one that had often supplied a fund of amusement to herself and sisters ; but alas ! that too conspired against her ; it had lost its power to please, and quickly shared the fate of the work.

Frances, a burthen to herself, next sauntered to the window. It was a beautiful day, and as the refreshing breezes fanned her feverish cheek, she sighed for liberty, and envied the little songsters of the grove the freedom and peace which they enjoyed. After her unsatisfied eye had wandered, for a few minutes, over the beautifully variegated landscape, she turned away in disgust, painfully convinced, that a mind at war with itself can take no delight in those scenes and employments which, in moments of contentment and internal peace, are capable of affording the most exquisite pleasure.

Four hours passed heavily away, and Frances was still irresolute, whether to follow the impulse of reason and divine grace, which prompted her to humble herself and obtain pardon, or yield to her vindictive temper, and indulge her pride. When she revolved in her mind all the considerations that her mother had urged, she felt disposed to make the required concession, for she loved her mother, and regretted that she had rendered her unhappy. But Jane Mordaunt was the obstacle. "How can I humble myself to her?" said she, mentally ; "shall I not degrade myself by doing so? Yet how otherwise escape from this melancholy imprisonment? Mamma, when once she forms a resolution, is inflexible. I am too well persuaded, that I cannot get the better of her, as I did of my governess. I wish I was like Maria ; she is always happy ; and if she offend any one, is never easy till she begs pardon. I will try to resemble her?" In this disposition she extended her hand to the bell, but, at the same moment, the recollection of Miss Mordaunt occurred to her mind, and immediately overthrew her good but feeble resolution. Thrice she essayed to ring, and as often did the demon of pride, which still triumphed in her breast, oppose her resolves and withhold her hand.

Frances, though anxious for a reconciliation, was not yet contrite. She desired to be restored to society, because she hated solitude, and wished to be at peace with her family, because the reproaches of her conscience deprived her mind of its wonted repose. As she was not deficient



in sense, and was by no means depraved at heart, she was conscious that she did wrong in giving way to her passions. She had even repeatedly determined that she would endeavor to overcome them; but, fearful that the necessary exertion would be too painful to her self-love, all her resolutions had hitherto proved unavailing. The time she at length fixed on for a reform was that of her first communion, and in the mean while she proposed to indulge her humors, but to act, after that period, in a very different manner. Mistaken idea! yet too common among children and young persons, who are apt to imagine, that three or four weeks are sufficient for preparing them to approach worthily to this great sacrament; and that, in the interim, they are at liberty to offend God with impunity. The predominant attachment to self-will, so common among children, and their extreme aversion to every species of self-denial, afford strong grounds for apprehension, that very many make their first communion in dispositions little suited to that important act. How carefully, then, should parents, and others who have the direction of youth, instil into the minds of their tender charge a great horror for sin; and as their opening ideas gradually qualify them to receive instruction in the mysteries of religion, gently lead them to refer all their actions, and to offer up all their little trials, mortifications and disappointments, as a remote preparation for that most serious and sacred of all duties—their first communion.

The solitude of Frances was at length interrupted by the entrance of Bridgeman, Lady Alton's maid. "You need not have given yourself the trouble to bring me any dinner," said Frances on the approach of the servant, "for I am not disposed to eat."

"Her ladyship wishes you to take some refreshment," replied Mrs. Bridgeman, placing the things on the table before her. "You know, miss, my lady will be uneasy, if you do not eat something."

"Then why did mamma shut me up here? If she lavishes all her tenderness on Jane Mordaunt, and her other children, surely it cannot concern her much what becomes of me."

"Hush, Miss Frances," interrupted the attendant, "you shock me; will you be unjust to the best of mothers, as well as to Miss Mordaunt? If I were to tell her ladyship what you say, I know not what would be the consequence,

it would so deeply afflict her. And as to Miss Mordaunt, you think her your enemy, but I am sure she is not; she has been miserable ever since you were in disgrace."

"Oh, very miserable, no doubt!" retorted Frances, "when she herself is the cause of it. No; she triumphs in my disgrace, and exults in the friendship of Maria and my mother."—"Dear Miss Frances, if I could but convince you to the contrary, I am certain that you would be less unhappy, less unjust!"

"Perhaps I should be neither the one nor the other; but I clearly perceive you are all alike, and so it is useless to talk to you."—"There is not one in the house, now Miss Belton is gone, that has not the same favorable opinion of Miss Mordaunt," continued Bridgeman; "she makes no mischief, and is affable and kind to every body."

"It is very strange," said Frances, "that every one sees with eyes so different from mine. Miss Mordaunt appears quite a divinity among you; for my part, I have never liked the girl since she came to the house; though I hardly know why."—"But I do, Miss Frances."

"Then pray, since you have so penetrating a genius, let me hear the reason."—"It is," replied the attendant, "because you are troubled with a complaint of the same nature as the jaundice!"

"What is that?" rejoined Frances.—"Why, miss, you will perhaps be offended when I tell you, but it is jealousy. When people have the jaundice, every object appears yellow! So those who are of an envious or jealous disposition, see every thing with a prejudiced eye."

"Thank you, Mrs. *Preacher*," interrupted Frances, "you have learned that fine speech from mamma. I do not want, however, to hear any sermons from you; and, therefore, you may be gone. But no (perceiving that the servant was about to retire); you have talked me into a better humor; I think I will eat my dinner, make up my mind to pay the penalty, and obtain my release from prison. Say something in my favor to mamma, and tell her I have taken the refreshment she was so kind as to send me."

Bridgeman withdrew, and Frances, to whom every species of submission was painful, but to whom solitude and confinement were still more irksome, began, for the first time, to consider in what particular Miss Mordaunt had offended her; and why, for nearly a year, she had made

her the butt of her ill-humor. She had discernment enough to know that the fault was on her own side, and that it originated in the defects of her temper. "I am afraid mamma and Bridgeman are right, when they insist that jealousy is the cause; yet I do not like to own it, even to myself. I am aware that it is a vice which every one hates, and I should hate it in another. Almighty God, then, hates it, and will punish me for it! Help me, O Lord!" she exclaimed, raising her thoughts for the first time to heaven; "help me to overcome this fault which renders me miserable! I will endeavor to love her, indeed I will, in spite of myself." Saying this, she burst into tears. They were not now tears of passion, but of sorrow and regret. While she was in this temper of mind, some one gently opened the door, and to the great surprise and mortification of Frances, the new governess entered the room.

"I was disappointed, my love," said Miss Hargrave, tenderly taking Frances by the hand, "in not meeting you at the dinner table; may I have the satisfaction of seeing you in our circle at tea?" "I do not know," replied Frances, rather bluntly, "but," softening her tone, "I have been thinking about it."

"Then put your good resolutions in practice: take courage; there is no disgrace in humbling ourselves after we have offended; but our faults are much aggravated by persisting in them."—"I should feel no difficulty," said Frances, sobbing violently, "if it were only necessary to ask pardon of mamma; but——"

"But what, my dear?"—"Miss Mordaunt will so triumph over me when she finds that, by mamma's orders, I am obliged to humble myself to her. Indeed I cannot; or if I yield merely to obtain my liberty, and not with sincerity of heart, of what value will my submission be in the sight of God, or even in the estimation of Jane, if she become acquainted with my motives?"

"Of none, certainly. But you will, without doubt, make the sacrifice with all your heart, as your disposition, I am sure, is good, when I inform you that it will be more painful to Miss Mordaunt to receive your apology, than to you to offer it."—"How can that be?" asked Frances hastily.

"Because," replied her governess, "she is too humble to exact any concessions from you, and too much afflicted in having been the unintentional cause of your punishment,

to wish for your further humiliation. She has been on her knees to your mother, imploring her to pardon you without the enjoined conditions; but her entreaties have been unavailing. She has taken no nourishment, and has passed the day, on your account, in greater misery than you can possibly have desired, how much soever you may hate her." "I do not *hate* her, ma'am," said Frances, startled at the word; "I never said I did."

"I trust, for your own sake, my dear young lady, that you do not; but if your lips have not dared to utter so strong an expression, your conduct, at least, seems to have betrayed your feelings. To avoid, therefore, a repetition of the events of to-day, your mamma, ever solicitous for the comfort of her children, proposes to send Miss Mordaunt to school for four years, hoping by that means to contribute to your happiness, and convince you that you are equally dear to her with the rest of her family. It is not, however, without considerable regret, that she feels herself obliged to have recourse to such a measure. Your sister is in tears at the bare suggestion of it, and assures her mamma that she is persuaded your heart is too good to desire that it should be carried into execution. Her ladyship, however, seems resolved, and waits only the return of Sir James to lay the subject before him. Thus, by the indulgence of a predominant failing, you have heedlessly rendered yourself a prey to inquietude, accused your affectionate mother and sister of unjust partiality, and will be the means of banishing an amiable, unprotected orphan from your father's house, and casting her upon the bounty of an unfeeling world! Is this conduct worthy of a daughter of Sir James Alton? is it worthy of a Christian?"

"Ah, madam! say no more; only plead for me," sobbed out the humbled Frances, sinking at the feet of Miss Hargrave, and overwhelmed by the retrospection of the evils she had caused; "I will not, indeed I will not make mamma uneasy again about Miss Mordaunt. I will not ill-treat her any more, nor endeavor to vex and render her unhappy, as I acknowledge I have repeatedly done. I will be careful in future not to charge her with faults of which I know she is not guilty. Will you conduct me to mamma, and intercede for me?"

"If, my dear child, you are really sincere in your protestations of amendment, I will most willingly exert my

interest with Lady Alton to soften her displeasure. In the mean while, beg of Almighty God to confirm you by his grace in your good resolutions. Remember that, without the divine assistance, we are unable to effect any virtuous purpose, but that with it, we can readily overcome the greatest difficulties. Contemplate the hideousness of the monster you have entertained in your bosom; consider its consequences; how destructive it has already proved to your own peace and to that of others; even of those whom you most tenderly love. Search into your heart and discover the source of this unfortunate propensity; or, if you do not know yourself sufficiently, allow me to point it out. Envy takes its rise in *pride*, *self-love*, and too great a desire of *praise*. Jealousy and her mean attendant, Suspicion, flow likewise from the same corrupted source. Destroy, then, the roots of the evil, and the branches will speedily decay."

"But what must I do, dear madam, to overcome these faults?" asked Frances.—"Endeavor," replied Miss Hargrave, "to conceive a more humble opinion of yourself; for which end consider, that of ourselves we are nothing, without the particular grace of God. Whatever sentiments of virtue we may entertain, whatever talents we may possess, let us remember that they are not inherent in our nature, but are, on the contrary, gratuitous gifts of the Almighty, which he bestows for the purpose of enabling us to effect our salvation. Nor are these talents distributed to each in an equal proportion. To one are given five, to another two, to another only one; but we are not permitted to despise the latter, nor envy the former. Why, then, my dear child, should you suffer yourself to be uneasy, because Miss Mordaunt is further advanced in her education than you are? In the first place, she is three years older; in the second, her father has taken extraordinary pains with her; yet I do not find that she makes any boast of her superior knowledge, or wishes to display it. You may, by application, acquire equal skill, by the time you attain the same age. Emulation is always praiseworthy: emulate, then, but do not, in future, envy her proficiency."

"But she gains every one's esteem," said Frances, "and nobody loves me so much as they do her; this often makes me angry."

"But is it just that you should be angry with Miss Mor-

daunt on that account? The source of the evil is in yourself. Imitate those virtues which render her the object of esteem, and you will be as much beloved. Endeavor to subdue *self-love*, and you will become mild, affable and obliging in your demeanor. This will insure you the favorable opinion of your acquaintance, domestics and dependents. Be gentle and yielding to your sisters; obedient, attentive and affectionate to your parents; by this means you will obtain their esteem and confidence. Do not permit yourself, for one moment, to harbor the injurious thought, that they are deficient in affection towards you, since you possess every proof you can reasonably desire, that you are tenderly beloved. Open your heart to the affections which nature has planted in the human breast, and never suffer them to be blighted and destroyed by the baleful effects of envy and selfish passions. But I have said enough, my dear young lady, for the present occasion; it is my wish to convince, and not to tire you. Permit me, however, to trespass on your patience a few moments longer. You have sinned against the precept of charity, which enjoins us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and have thus offended God, who is jealous of the observance of his commandments, and who will not allow us to violate them with impunity. It is not enough, therefore, when we have injured our neighbors that we ask pardon of them alone. Almighty God is offended by us in their persons; and we must consequently seek a reconciliation with him as well as with them.”—“But how can I do this?” inquired Frances.

“Our merciful Lord has himself provided the means in the sacrament of penance. There, by humbly confessing our sins, with a sincere sorrow for having offended him, and a firm resolution to transgress no more (without which, confession itself is of no avail), we shall be restored to the favor of Heaven, and obtain grace to be more on our guard for the future. Prepare yourself, then, to perform this act of just satisfaction to your offended God, and do not retire to rest without making a sincere act of contrition. Will you promise, my love, to do what I recommend?”

“Most willingly,” replied Frances, “I will endeavor to submit to whatever you consider necessary.” She then requested Miss Hargrave to accompany her to her mother. The latter consented, and led her weeping pupil to the

feet of Lady Alton. Frances repeated the good resolutions she had formed, and earnestly entreated her mother not to think of sending away Miss Mordaunt. The young ladies were then summoned to attend. "You should not have been so long alone, dear Frances," said the affectionate Maria, tenderly embracing her sister, "if mamma would have permitted me to come to your room. Dry up your tears; all will now be forgotten." Frances, remembering the conditions of her pardon, now turned towards Jane, and was greatly moved when she beheld her swollen eye and dejected countenance. She quickly disengaged herself from the embraces of her sister, and would have thrown herself at the feet of Miss Mordaunt (so completely was she humbled), had not that young lady absolutely prevented her.

She made many apologies for her former ill conduct, and very sincerely promised amendment, declaring that she would try to deserve her friendship in future, and not again give her cause of uneasiness. Peace being thus restored to all parties, the evening was devoted to festivity and innocent amusement. From that time Frances, profiting by the lesson she had received, the humiliations to which her high spirit had been obliged to submit, her exposure to the servants on account of so degrading a vice as jealousy, and the conviction that no indulgence would in future be extended to this hateful propensity, wisely determined to resist and subdue it. Her efforts were crowned with success, and she congratulated herself on enjoying a degree of peace to which she had been a stranger ever since she had harbored in her bosom so dangerous a guest. She even began to discover in her supposed rival those amiable qualities which had always been acknowledged by others, but which envy had formerly hidden from her perverted sight. And in Maria she willingly admitted a superior virtue, which, she confessed, she had not yet the courage to imitate.

How dreadful are the passions of jealousy and envy! There are, perhaps, none more destructive of human happiness, or more capable of blunting the finest feelings of the soul. They impair the energies of the mind, corrode the heart, and, by souring the temper, destroy the very vitals of domestic enjoyment; while they disqualify the unhappy being who is a prey to them, from fulfilling, in a proper manner, the duties of social life.

## CHAPTER XIV.

ON the day appointed by Lady Alton for the young ladies to commence their studies under their new governess, Miss Hargrave produced a paper on which she had drawn out a few rules for their observance, and to which she requested the signature of Sir James and Lady Alton, should they approve of them. She opened her manuscript in the presence of the children, after some introductory observations, and read as follows:—

“Regulations of time, reduced to three principal heads. First, from the middle of February to the first of November, the ladies are to rise at a quarter before seven, to be called only once, and the three eldest to dress themselves. During the remainder of the year, to rise at half past seven, without fire. To breakfast at nine, dine at two, drink tea at six, and retire to rest at nine.

“Secondly, Employments. Hours of study to commence at ten o’clock, and finish at two. During this time, no conversation will be permitted, except such as may be of absolute necessity. Music to be practised by each student one hour and a half, and drawing one hour, every day.”

“Are these four hours to include the music and drawing lessons?” inquired Sir James. “I propose,” answered Miss Hargrave, “that the attendance of the masters should always be given during those hours; but the practice of the lessons must depend on the diligence of the young ladies and on other circumstances; as the afternoon will afford sufficient leisure for that which is omitted in the morning.” Sir James was satisfied, and Miss Hargrave resumed her paper. “Twenty minutes’ relaxation to be allowed at twelve o’clock, to take some slight refreshment. These regulations must never be departed from, except in cases of the greatest emergency. The afternoon and evening to be occupied in needlework of different kinds, useful and ornamental.

“Thirdly; As no employment of time, however profitable in the estimation of the world, can be conducive to our happiness in a future state, unless a just proportion be devoted to God and sanctified by prayer, I exhort my pupils to be particular in offering all their thoughts, words and actions to the Almighty in their morning devotions, which



are not to exceed a quarter of an hour. They are to hear mass every day, and, if possible, before breakfast. At twelve o'clock they are to recite the 'Angelus Domini;' at three, devote a quarter of an hour to serious reading, meditation or prayer; at six, repeat the 'Angelus,' and at half past eight, the evening prayers, with a short instructive lesson after them. No appeal must be made from my authority when I am so unfortunate as to be under the necessity of inflicting punishment."

"I approve of your rules, madam," said Sir James; "they are not complicate, but decisive, and well adapted to the object you have in view. I shall willingly subscribe my name to them; but," continued he, looking pleasantly on his daughters, "I fear my girls will not be equally satisfied with them, since no time appears to be allowed for play."

"I have not forgotten that recreation is necessary," returned Miss Hargrave, "and it will be observed that no employment is specified from a quarter past seven until ten o'clock, with the exception of hearing mass, which will occupy about half an hour, and taking breakfast, which latter, I dare say, my pupils will not be inclined to dispense with. During the remainder of that portion of the morning, they will be at liberty to employ themselves as may be most agreeable. Again, after dinner, at which it will be long enough to sit half an hour, there will be twenty minutes or more for relaxation; and the time I have allotted to needlework may be spent in preparing dresses for the doll, by those who are fond of such amusement. To enliven our working parties, one may occasionally read aloud an entertaining book, or we may beguile the hours with cheerful conversation. And if her ladyship, when at leisure, will honor us with her company, I am persuaded that it will add much to the pleasure of our little society."

The countenances of the children brightened into smiles at the explanation which the governess had given of their working parties, as they thought them calculated to afford an agreeable pastime. Lady Alton, too, was perfectly satisfied with the arrangements, and expressed her readiness to strengthen them by her signature. She observed, however, to Miss Hargrave, that taking the air did not seem to have entered into her plan. "I omitted to mention that particular, dear madam, lest my rules should become too

complicated; but I have not suffered a consideration of so much importance to escape my notice. I accordingly propose that Sir James allow each of the ladies a small plot of ground for a garden; and I should wish it to be cultivated entirely by themselves, as the exercise will benefit their health, and the manner of rearing plants will almost imperceptibly teach them the science of botany, which is, at the same time, instructive and entertaining."

"Oh do, papa!" cried all the children, delighted with the idea, "and we will give you and mamma such pretty nosegays!"

"Will you think me, madam," said Miss Mordaunt, timidly addressing her governess, "too old for the same employment? I am very fond of gardening."

"By no means, my dear; Sir James will willingly grant you a share with his daughters. Part of the afternoon or evening, according to the season, may be devoted to a walk, a visit to the poor cottagers, or the charity-school. And in the winter we must, of necessity, intrude on the hours of study, as the middle of the day is then the only time suitable for walking."

Lady Alton was well pleased with these details, and congratulated herself on having at length met with a lady whose plans were so conformable to her own. Teresa and Frances began to conceive a more favorable opinion of the new governess than they at first entertained, as it was now evident that they should enjoy much more liberty than they had previously ventured to expect. Maria and Jane were perfectly satisfied; and bidding mamma and papa adieu, they all retired to the school-room in high spirits.

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## CHAPTER XV.

MISS HARGRAVE found, upon examination, that all her pupils, except Miss Mordaunt, were unusually backward; for, in this intellectual age, children who have attained their twelfth or thirteenth year are expected to have made as much progress in their education, as was formerly looked for at seventeen.

Wholly devoted to her object, she applied herself, with the most unremitting attention, to study the disposition and

taste of the young ladies who were committed to her care. For the first three months she had many obstacles to contend against. Frances, with a superior capacity, was extremely volatile and giddy—proud of her abilities, self-willed and impatient of contradiction. Relying on an excellent memory, she trifled away the hours appointed for study; and, when reproved, haughtily answered, “With my capacity, ma’am, it is not necessary for me to pore over my lessons as Maria is obliged to do; if I read them twice or thrice, it is sufficient.”

“For you, perhaps, young lady,” replied the governess, coolly; “but not for me, as you have already experienced.”

The timid Maria was much more easily governed than Frances; but naturally indolent, and impressed with the idea of her sister’s superior genius, she applied to her lessons with extreme reluctance, from the notion that the task assigned her was far above her abilities. Dispositions so opposite required very different treatment. Maria was to be encouraged, and the dormant powers of her mind awakened and stimulated to action, by gentleness and the promise of reward. Her talents, though less brilliant than those of her sister, were by no means contemptible; and when, by a generous resolution, she had determined to conquer her indolence, her studies became a pleasing employment, and her proficiency was rapid. From the time when Maria began to prepare for her first communion, she made the greatest efforts to subdue her faults; it was not, therefore, surprising, that her constitutional listlessness quickly disappeared. Whenever she expressed any discouragement at the sight of a difficult lesson, the governess had only to remind her of the great sacrament for which she was preparing, and she would answer, “I will learn it, then, for the love of God; and in order to please him; perhaps, also, my good angel will assist me;” and she immediately exerted herself, with all possible diligence, to accomplish the object in view.

Miss Hargrave took great pains to impress her pupils with an idea of the presence of God, and exhorted them to sanctify their studies by occasionally raising their hearts to him by short but fervent aspirations. She sometimes reminded them that their good angel was ever at their side, who would be pleased with their diligence, and pained by their ill-humor carelessness and neglect. Unwilling to

use coercion where gentleness was likely to succeed, she smoothed, as much as possible, the path of learning, and varied their studies in so agreeable a manner, as to prevent their being fatigued by applying too long at a time to the same object.

"I have found your method of teaching grammar, dear madam, peculiarly easy," said Miss Mordaunt to her governess, in one of their conversations; "I think it will be advisable for me to follow the same plan. Will you, therefore, occasionally give me some further instruction on the manner of teaching? I perceive that it is not the same to know a thing, and to be able to impart that knowledge to others."

"Not exactly; for it is on the *method* of conveying instruction, that the progress of the pupil materially depends. Dry and uninteresting studies may be rendered agreeable to youth, by familiar explanations: and that method which is best suited to the child's understanding is always the most expeditious, though it is certainly much more troublesome to the teacher."

"How more troublesome to the teacher, ma'am?" asked Miss Mordaunt.—"The reason is obvious," rejoined the governess; "because the teacher, instead of contenting herself with putting a grammar into the hands of the child, and enjoining her a certain lesson, will invariably explain to the comprehension of her pupil the task she is desired to commit to memory. This demands, on the part of the instructress, diligence, perseverance and unwearied patience; because children in general are too volatile to allow explanations to make much impression on their minds, unless they be frequently repeated. This degree of attention, however, can only be paid when the number of pupils is very limited."

"As the object of my education is to enable me to teach others," resumed Jane, "will you, dear madam, think me troublesome, if I ask you a few questions?"—"It is never troublesome to me to converse on topics from which you may derive instruction," said the governess; "I will, therefore, enter into your views, and pursue the subject with pleasure."

"I wish," interrupted Miss Alton, "I knew the grammar as well as you do, Jane."—"I conceive there is no absolute necessity that you should, my dear Maria," replied

Miss Mordaunt. "I must study the language, in order to qualify myself to teach it to others; you will need it merely for your own use."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Lady Alton, who requested the company of the children and their governess, in a walk she proposed to take to the charity-school, which was situated about half a mile from the house.

"I do not much like that walk, mamma," said Frances; "I feel no pleasure in looking at a parcel of dirty, ragged children, and hearing them read in a tone of voice that is enough to put one in the horrors."

"Whoever does not take an interest in a concern of this nature," said Lady Alton, "must, undoubtedly, find it tedious. I am not, therefore, desirous that any of you should come, unless it be perfectly agreeable. Your governess will accompany me, because we have both the same object in view, the improvement of poor children. You may amuse yourself as you please at home." None of the young ladies, however, except Frances, were willing to forego the pleasure of walking with their mother, till, by repeated entreaties on the part of Frances, Teresa was prevailed on to remain behind, in order to play with her.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

Two charity-schools, the one for girls, the other for boys, had been set on foot by the late baronet, after his return to the Park. They had been established between two and three years; the children had made great progress in learning, and the improvement of their moral conduct was sensibly felt and acknowledged by their parents and neighbors. Sir William Alton, on forming his schools, had incurred much expense in clothing the children in a neat uniform, according to the usual mode. The year following, Sir James did the same; but finding that no care was taken of the clothes, either by parents or children, and that, in six months' time, the latter were again in rags; Mr. Morini, after due consideration, persuaded him to adopt a plan which he thought more likely to succeed. This was not to clothe all the children indis-

criminally, but to furnish them with different articles of dress as rewards for merit, and he suggested that this regulation might induce both parents and children to be more careful.

The plan was adopted, and clothes were held out as the recompense of punctual attendance at school, diligence in study, obedience to parents and masters, regularity in frequenting the chapel on Sundays and festivals, peaceable conduct towards each other, industry and early rising. The boys were encouraged to industry by the promise of a reward for undertaking the care of their father's garden. This idea greatly pleased them, and when no garden was attached to the cottage, a small plot of ground contiguous was immediately allotted for the purpose. Seeds and young plants, supplied by Sir James's gardener, soon furnished it with every article useful for a cottager; and if it was kept in neat order, free from weeds, and well cropped, the young cultivator was to be amply recompensed. The second of July was fixed upon for the distribution of prizes to the young aspirants, and was to be called the "Gardener's feast." The boys who, on that occasion, had their gardens in good order, and were able to exhibit specimens of fruit and vegetables, in as high a state of perfection as could be expected from them, were rewarded with such clothes, or useful tools for husbandry, as their circumstances required. Nor were the girls entirely excluded from the benefits of this festival, for they also were encouraged to employ their moments of recreation in the culture of flowers; and whoever could produce a pretty nosegay of her own rearing, and show that her garden was carefully attended to, was entitled to a useful present.

This plan was not acted upon till the autumn, and though it had now been established only nine months, its beneficial effects were already visible; for from the time of its institution, not a child was to be seen loitering about the village during the time of recreation. All who could handle a tool were employed in digging up or laying out the hitherto neglected, but now delightful, garden. The little ones, who could neither dig nor plant, were engaged in collecting manure, or in picking up stones to pave the walks. Children are generally enthusiasts, and embrace with ardor whatever strikes their fancy. When any new object engages their attention, they pursue it with avidity, and

spare no pains till they have accomplished their purpose. The hope of reward carries them pleasantly through their labors, which a sanguine imagination always crowns with success. The prospect of recompense from Sir James; anxiety to obtain his approbation and favor; the laudable ambition of producing the finest fruit, the most forward vegetables, and the prettiest flowers; together with the desire of being able to exhibit a well-arranged garden to Lady Alton, when she was pleased, as she often was, to honor their cottage with a visit: these considerations acted as a stimulus to our youthful laborers, and induced them to defy toil, neglect play, and dispense with unnecessary sleep.

Sir James's gardener readily entered into the views of his master for the public good, and willingly supplied his numerous applicants with all that was requisite; pointing out to them what was proper for the winter crop, and what must be planted for the ensuing spring; giving them young fruit trees which would come into bearing the following summer, that the pleasure of tasting the produce of their labor might sweeten the toil. The little flower-garden was under the more immediate superintendence of the girls, and applications were made every day to the good-natured Jervase for rose-trees, honeysuckles, jasmine, &c. One would have a border of thrift, another of daisies, and others, again, preferred the neat ever-green box. Each amused herself and companions with painting, in vivid colors, the beauty that their cottage would exhibit next year, with the pretty flowers she proposed to train against its walls. Thus the time passed on in innocent amusement and delight, till the winter put an end, for a few months, to their labors.

Sir James, though absent from home, was still anxious for the welfare of his little colony, as he called the children of the peasantry; and sensible that idleness is the parent of mischief, and fearful lest the good habits that had been established among them should be lost during the winter, when they were no longer able to work in the garden, he proposed that the boys should be taught to knit, and by way of encouraging them to labor, he promised to purchase all the stockings they should make during their leisure hours, at one shilling per pair, which money should be at their own disposal, provided they were willing

to lay it out usefully. The girls, also, were to have an opportunity of earning something for themselves, in the same way, if they could do so, without neglecting the care of their clothes, and their other domestic duties. The school-mistress was empowered to supply the worsted, examine the work, and take charge of it when completed.

An old woman, who was expert in the business, was engaged to begin and finish off the work for such as were not able to do it for themselves, and to go from cottage to cottage to superintend the whole. The stockings, when paid for, were to be carried to an apartment selected as a store-room for the clothes of the poor, and were afterwards to be distributed gratuitously among them, as their necessities might require. The well-meaning parents of these poor children, becoming sensible, by experience, of the benefits which resulted from their being always usefully employed, seconded the views of their benefactors, and encouraged their family to be industrious; as by that means they became less quarrelsome, noisy and difficult to govern.

The following were the rules appointed by Sir James Alton to be observed in the distribution of clothing. Regular attendance at the chapel on Sundays and holidays, to be rewarded with a pair of strong shoes every six months, if requisite; and daily attendance and diligence at school, with a jacket and pair of trowsers. If many days were missed, without sufficient cause, only one of these articles to be obtained. The most diligent and attentive to study, to receive two pairs of stockings. Obedience to parents, moral conduct and civility of manners, to be encouraged by a present of two good shirts. Industry, early rising, works of ingenuity and personal cleanliness, to be rewarded with a new hat. The whole of these observances to obtain the full suit of wearing apparel. It was likewise judged expedient to reward those boys, whose clothes were kept in the best repair, by giving some useful article to themselves or parents, under the impression that this would prove a stimulus both to the one and the other.

Lady Alton perfectly concurred in these regulations, and thought it advisable to place the girls on the same footing. She was well aware, that children are capable of great efforts when animated by the hope of reward. She found by experience, that during the two preceding years, when they had been gratuitously furnished with clothes, no care



whatever had been taken of them by either children or parents. Such gratuities rarely produce the beneficial effect proposed, unless exertion is required on the part of either to obtain them. That which costs the poor nothing, they take little pains to preserve; and, instead of rendering them economical and industrious, it too frequently promotes habits of idleness and expense.

Let it not, however, be hence inferred, that the opulent are discharged from the obligation of assisting the poor and needy, because their charity is often abused. This circumstance merely shows the necessity of great vigilance, and of a well-arranged system, in the distribution of their bounty. If the industrious are sought out, encouraged and rewarded, while the idle, extravagant and immoral are but slightly noticed; the former will be confirmed in their good habits, and the latter, through motives of self-interest, that powerful stimulator of our actions, will be induced to imitate their example. Cleanliness, economy and industry are so essential to the happiness of the poor, that children, from their earliest infancy, should be impressed with their importance, and encouraged to acquire them. These qualities may be placed, also, in the rank of moral virtues; since an industrious man will be rarely found a drunkard, or a frequenter of idle company; nor will a woman, who is notable in her house, and careful to keep her own and children's clothes in repair, be often seen gossiping or quarrelling with her neighbors. Such people are mostly fond of home, and attached to one another; and their children are brought up in a more moral and orderly manner than those of the idle and unprincipled. If, at any time, they are tempted to swerve from the laws of moral rectitude, it is because, overwhelmed by poverty and cast down by neglect, they feel that they are no longer equally interested in making their little pittance go far, and in laboring hard to procure a scanty subsistence. While their profligate neighbor, his indolent wife and dirty children are repeatedly clothed and almost daily fed, because their apparent wretchedness excites compassion; the decent laborer and his family, who make a creditable appearance in their regular attendance at church, who suffer in silence the ills of poverty, till they can no longer be concealed, are too often passed by unheeded, from the impression that, because they are neat and clean, they have no wants.

Mistaken idea ! These are they who have a just claim on the bounty of the rich, and who merit their countenance and support before they are obliged, through extreme penury, to strip themselves of all their comforts, and, as a last resource, to take refuge in a workhouse.

Sir James Alton made the interests of the poor his own. Feeling an exquisite pleasure in being looked up to as the father and protector of his dependents and laborers, he did his utmost to improve the condition of every one around him. In all his benevolent works, he was ably seconded by his lady. The Catholics of his neighborhood were encouraged more than others, but his bounty was not confined to them. Every one who was in distress had powerful claims on the assistance of this charitable Samaritan, no matter what were his religious opinions. And how much soever it was desired by Sir James, that all in his neighborhood should come to the knowledge of the true faith, nevertheless he held out no promises of future favor, nor threats of losing present support, for the accomplishment of this end. In the choice of their religion, they were left free agents, and, provided their moral conduct was unexceptionable, they were sure of being relieved in sickness and misfortune.



## CHAPTER XVII.

WE left Lady Alton going to the school. The object of her visit was to inquire, what number of girls would be entitled to new clothes on Whit-Sunday, the day appointed for their appearance in them. On the entrance of their beneficent patroness, the children respectfully arose from their seats, pleasure beaming in the eyes of such as knew themselves deserving of reward. Lady Alton looked at them all with a scrutinizing eye, to ascertain if they were neat and clean. Those who were so, received the meed of praise that was due to them, and were presented with some fruit which the young ladies had brought for that purpose. The mistress was then required to make her report of the number of candidates for clothes, specifying the various articles which each one was recommended to receive.

The girls were immediately ordered by their governess to produce their tickets, and hand them to her ladyship. All were quickly in motion, and about twenty delighted children successively presented their little billets. Among these, ten had been so diligent as not to fail in the least particular, and they were consequently entitled to full suits of clothing. Six were adjudged deserving of every article except bonnets and cloaks; and the claims of the other four extended only to shoes, stockings and bonnets. These last shed a few tears on receiving a slight but good-natured reproof from their amiable benefactress, for having entitled themselves to so small a provision. Maria attempted to plead for them, on their promising to be more diligent in future.

"You seldom ask me any thing, my dear Maria," said her ladyship, "that I am under the necessity of refusing; but in this instance you must excuse me. I reward the industrious and diligent with as much pleasure as my little friends experience in receiving my gifts; but the indolent and inattentive must be paid only in proportion to their deserts."

Lady Alton then, casting her eyes round the room, perceived three or four girls in a corner, whose tearful eyes and melancholy countenances were the visible effects of previous ill conduct. Her ladyship desired them to come forward; but they approached with slow and hesitating steps, conscious of their disgrace. Among them were two children of twelve years of age, whose torn garments, uncombed hair and dirty skin, sufficiently portrayed their own indolence, and the neglect of their parents.

"Your not having obtained shoes and stockings," observed Lady Alton, in a severe tone of voice, "is a proof that you have neglected your duty to God, by absenting yourselves from divine service on Sundays and holidays. Your duty to God, my children, is an imperative duty, which must take place of every other; and unless you endeavor to fulfil it to the utmost of your power, you must neither expect the grace of God here, nor the happiness of heaven hereafter."

"I have not missed more than six or seven times," exclaimed one of the girls, "ever since we were told we should not have the clothes unless we attended. I think

it is very hard to get nothing at all. Father and mother are too poor to buy them for us, so we must now stay at home entirely.”—“Then,” replied her ladyship, “your parents should have been more diligent themselves, and more assiduous to make you so.”

“They thought we should have been clothed as usual.”—“But you were told to the contrary,” said her ladyship, “and, therefore, must now submit to the disgrace and punishment, which should ever attend indolence and neglect of duty.”

“Well, then,” rejoined the undaunted girl, as she hastily retired to her seat, “if I cannot be dressed like the others, I will not go to chapel at all, to be pointed at by every one; and I dare say father and mother will take me away from school.”

Lady Alton heard, but did not reprove her, kindly considering her childish threats as nothing more than the result of disappointed pride.

Her ladyship now addressed herself to Betsey Kerr, another girl who was not entitled to any reward, saying, “From you, Betsey, I expected better conduct; I have generally heard a good character of you. Why, then, for these last six months, have you been so negligent, when you knew that clothes were to be given only to the industrious?”

During this address Betsey (unlike the other hardened child) had sunk at the feet of her patroness; and, overwhelmed with grief, was unable to speak for tears.

“Let me plead for her,” said the compassionate Miss Alton; “she seems very sorry.”—“Rise,” said her ladyship, affected by the grief of the still prostrate girl; “dry your tears—they are useless now; and let me hear what you have to say in your defence. Although you cannot have the clothes, I may still be able to do something for you, if I find you deserving.”

Encouraged by the kind look and gentle tone which accompanied these words, she hastily wiped away her streaming tears, and attempted to speak. “I am myself alone so much to blame, that I do not know if I can say any thing to your ladyship to excuse me.”

Saying this, oppressed by painful recollections, she again burst into tears. “Shall I speak for her, madam?” said Mrs. Batty, the schoolmistress; “her tears overpower

her, poor thing! She has done nothing but fret ever since she knew your ladyship was coming."

"I would rather she should speak for herself," rejoined her ladyship; "and if she ingenuously own her faults, it will be the most likely means of amending them, and obtaining my favor."

"Speak, my girl," said the mistress, patting Betsey on the head, and wiping away the tears with her apron; "speak up, acknowledge that you have done wrong, but do not make yourself worse than you are." The little penitent made another effort to repress her tears, and told her artless tale:—

"I see plainly it is all my own fault, madam; father always desires me to rise at six o'clock in the morning in summer, and as soon as it is light the rest of the year, and I have for some months past neglected to do so. He calls me only once, and then goes out to work; if I do not rise directly, I fall asleep again, and perhaps do not wake before seven or later, in which case I have not time to perform all my work, and get the breakfast ready by eight o'clock, at which hour he returns."

"But has all this any thing to do with your attendance at school?" interrupted Lady Alton.—"Yes, ma'am," replied the child; "because, when I do not rise at the hour fixed, and get all my work done, father will not let me come to school, nor yet go to chapel on Sundays. This I think very hard, and I get out of humor with myself, and every body else. I do nothing but cry and grumble all day, and every thing seems to go wrong to punish me."

"But your sister and brother have received whole suits of clothes," said her ladyship; "how comes this? You are the eldest, and should have been more diligent."—"It is because I am the oldest that father requires more of me than he does of them. I am obliged to wash them, and send them neat to school and to chapel, otherwise I am blamed again. So if they do not obtain rewards for diligence, it is their own fault; but I fear I shall never, never get any thing again."

"But what excuse," resumed Lady Alton, "can you make for appearing here in this dirty condition to-day, when you knew I was coming? Did your parents send you in this state in order to affront me?"

"Oh no, my lady, indeed they did not; it was only

to punish me. Do not be angry with them; it was my own fault. I neglected to wash myself out of opposition to father, who likes always to see us neat and clean; but I was so vexed and angry to think my brothers and sisters would get new clothes, and be praised for their diligence, which I was principally the cause of, and to see them look so cheerful and happy, while I was conscious that I should get a bad character and disgrace, that I told father I would not go to school, to be pointed out to your ladyship as an idler. He insisted I should dress myself; I would not stir; and at last, quite angry, he took a stick, drove me before him, and would not leave me till he saw me in the school-room, and desired our mistress to punish me severely."

"And has she punished you?" asked Lady Alton.—  
"Ah no, madam! she is kinder to me than I deserve. I told her my faults, and she said I was punished enough already; and, indeed, I am very miserable."

"Then let your present affliction, my dear child," said Lady Alton, feelingly, "be a lesson for the future, and induce you to make an effort to overcome your faults. What particular motive has your father in requiring you to be so punctual in rising early?"—"He says, ma'am, unless I contract a habit of rising betimes, I shall never be able to keep a place, for no one will maintain a lazy servant; and that lying in bed throws every thing behind-hand; also that it is bad for the health."

"His reason is good," replied her ladyship, "and his motive for urging it perfectly just. You have yourself discovered, by dear-bought experience, the truth of what he says. Attend, then, to his advice, and be assured, that in all the concerns of life, you will find the advantage of it; while sloth, on the contrary, brings with it an innumerable train of evils. This one fault has caused you to fall into many others. By disobedience to the orders of your father, you have been the means of frequently putting him out of humor, not with yourself only, but with the rest of the family, who had not offended. You neglected your school, and lost the opportunity of acquiring the knowledge of your duty, and forfeited your claim to clothing. Thus you have become a greater burthen to your parents. But, above all, you have wilfully offended your God, by neglecting to hear mass on Sundays; and I

feel fully persuaded, that the duty of saying your morning prayers has been often omitted. Is it not so?"—"Yes, ma'am," replied the humble girl. "See, then," continued her ladyship, "the many sins you have fallen into, and shudder at their consequence, if they be not speedily repented of."

"I well know, that Mr. Morini has been solicitous to prepare all of your age, who were steady and well disposed, to make their first communion, and you have, for the last four months, scarcely ever attended the instructions. You must, therefore, be deprived of that happiness for another year—and all this for what? A selfish gratification, the enjoyment of which lasted but for a moment; while the remorse and discontent arising from disobedience, slothfulness, and neglect of duty, followed you all day. Do I not speak truth, Maria?" continued Lady Alton, turning to her daughter with an inquiring and significant look.

"Ah, mamma! you know I have but too often felt the sad effects of indolence," said the ingenuous girl, while her cheeks were covered with conscious blushes; "but, indeed, I do endeavor to overcome it."

"I know you do, my dear child, and I trust Betsey will follow your good example, and make a firm resolution to subdue this destructive failing."—"I will, indeed I will," exclaimed Betsey; clasping her hands; "but I do not know how I shall ever keep my resolution; I have so very, very often promised to do better; and yet in the morning, feeling myself sleepy, I could not resolve to rise the moment I was called, but thought it would do presently: in the mean while, I fell asleep again."

"I can readily believe this," replied her ladyship; "but if you were promised to go to a fair, to pay a visit, or obtain something you wished for, could you not then rouse yourself?"

"I think I should, madam, even without being called; the thought of the pleasure would make me wakeful."

"And is there no motive now, that you can propose to yourself, which may be equally efficacious?"—"Yes, ma'am," said Betsey, after a pause, "I will rise as soon as father calls me, that I may be able to come regularly to school, to show my gratitude to your ladyship, and to endeavor to regain your favor."

"Do it, my child, from a nobler motive; do it to please

God, and his grace will enable you to overcome all difficulties. Be assured that, however irksome any action may be to our frail nature, no sooner do we resolve to perform it for the love of God, than it is immediately divested of all its bitterness, and becomes even sweet and agreeable. Try the experiment, my good girl, for one month only, and I am sure you will receive much benefit from your exertions.” —“I am willing to try—will you please to tell me how to do it, madam?”

“Before you go to bed,” continued Lady Alton, “renew your determination to get up at the hour fixed by your father; beg of Almighty God to give you grace to do so for the love of him, and in order to have time to say your morning prayers, and to perform, in a proper manner, all the duties that belong to your station. Apply likewise to your angel guardian, and request him to assist you to overcome your slothful propensities, that you may not be exposed to the danger of again offending God. When you are called, think it is the voice of your good angel, and sit up immediately, using your utmost endeavors to rouse yourself. Make the sign of the cross, lift up your heart to God, and rise without delay, in order to please him. Have you not, Maria” (again turning to her daughter), “found this remedy efficacious?” —“I have, indeed, mamma, thanks to your kind instructions,” said Maria, “experienced its happy effects, not only in this instance, but on many other occasions, when the object to be accomplished was repugnant to my feelings, or appeared much beyond my capacity. The mere resolution to fulfil my duty for the love of God, has always rendered it easy.”

“No doubt of it. Our God is so kind a master, that he renders sweet, and even delightful, those things which we undertake in order to please him, however painful and humiliating they might otherwise prove to our weak nature. Try, then, my little ones,” continued her ladyship, addressing all the assembled group, “try to perform your every action for the love of God, and whatever you are engaged in will be well and pleasantly done. Your lessons will be carefully learned, your task of work diligently executed, and your domestic duties cheerfully fulfilled, without the threat of punishment. You will, in fine, become new children, a pattern and example to all around you.” —“I am afraid this will be very difficult,” said some among the group.



"Difficult, I admit," resumed her ladyship, "if we consult only our own inclinations, or rely solely on our feeble powers; but it will not be difficult, my dear children, if we implore the grace of God to strengthen our good will, and if we offer up all our employments with a view to please and serve him, remembering that he is ever present to observe our most trifling actions, and that he will reward or punish us, according as they have been well or ill performed."

"Does God, then, madam," said Sally Lindon, "deign to notice us when we clean the house, wash, bake, or do any thing of that kind?"—"He does, most certainly; and provided such duties are undertaken cheerfully, for his sake, they will obtain a great recompense."

"But I am obliged to do them," resumed Sally, "whether I will or not, and often much against my inclination. What merit then can I possess?"

"That of obedience, if you do them willingly, and, as I said before, in order to please God, because he has placed you in that condition of life which requires them of you; and if you will only consider, that his all-seeing eye is continually fixed upon you, you will, in every instance, perform them in your best manner, without the eye of a parent or mistress being obliged to watch you. Consider these things, my good children, and, as you grow up, you will become valuable servants and useful members of society."

Lady Alton now prepared to take her leave, again expressing her satisfaction with their general conduct, and her hope that, next year, every one would be entitled to her gifts, and that no sorrowful countenances would appear among them. As soon as they had quitted the school, Maria, addressing herself to her mother, intimated a wish to know something more about Betsey Kerr. "Her misfortunes, mamma, have arisen from the same cause as my own, and I feel deeply interested in her favor; especially, as she is so humble, and does not seek to justify, or make excuses for her conduct, or to throw the blame on others. Sally Lindon, too, deserves notice for her uncommon diligence; I dare say she must often have done violence to her inclinations."

"I am glad, Maria," remarked her ladyship, "to perceive, that you are interested in the welfare of our poor neighbors, as it will be a source of improvement both to yourself and to them. You may go, therefore, to Mrs

Batty, and, as it will be a half holiday to-morrow, ask her if she can find leisure to come to the Hall." On the return of Maria and Jane, they amused Frances with a recital of what had passed, and the animated terms in which they spoke of Betsey Kerr, made her long for the moment of Mrs. Batty's arrival.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

At the time appointed, Mrs. Batty was announced, and the anxious children entreated, that they might be present at the conversation. "Good evening, madam," said Mrs. Batty, on her entrance; "I have made bold to keep your ladyship waiting till this time, because I had a little washing to do, which I did not like to put off. I hope I am not too late."

"Not at all," replied her ladyship; "our time is of less value than yours. You have only exposed the curiosity of my girls to a little excitement; they wish to learn a few additional particulars respecting your favorite Betsey, who interested us so much yesterday by her tears, and the artless confession of her faults. But, Mrs. Batty, you are standing; I beg you will be seated. My dear girls, why were you not polite enough to offer Mrs. Batty a chair?"

Lady Alton was not one of those characters who suppose it incumbent on them to maintain their dignity by austere and haughty manners. On the contrary, she sought, by a pleasing affability, to remove the restraint under which inferiors usually labor in the presence of the great. Neither was there any danger of her being treated, on that account, with too much familiarity, since her conduct was always so regulated, as to secure her the consideration which was due to her rank. Virtue is the only real support of dignity; that alone can shield persons of distinction from the contempt and envy of their inferiors. Without virtue, their riches and their honors are of little importance; for, though fear will prevent the lower class from offering open insult to those of more exalted station, they will, nevertheless, think and speak of them with the utmost disrespect.

"I was afraid your ladyship had something to reprove me for," said Mrs. Batty, "and I have been under some

anxiety about it; but I hope, from what you said when I came in, that such is not the case.”—“By no means, my good friend,” replied her ladyship; “I am, on the contrary, perfectly satisfied with your behavior, and greatly obliged to you for entering so entirely into my views for the improvement of the children. We sent for you to inquire a few particulars about Betsey Kerr and Sally London. The diligence of the one, and the negligence of the other, have equally interested us. I think I am not acquainted with the parents of either.”

“George Kerr, madam, is an honest, hard-working man; by trade a thatcher. He wishes to bring up his children as industrious as he is himself, and this makes him appear rather a severe father; but I believe, upon the whole, he loves his children well enough, though it does not seem that he has a very tender way of showing his affection. He governs by fear, madam, and not by love. He is, however, a good husband, and lives very comfortably with his wife, who is a poor, delicate woman, and not able to do much for her family. This makes it very heavy for poor Betsey, who (independent of her laziness in the morning, and the faults which that occasionally brings her into) is a very amiable child, affectionate to her brothers and sisters, and most assiduous to relieve and assist her mother. Sometimes, when it has turned out wet at twelve o'clock, I have begged her to stay in the school-room till the rain was over; but she always refused, saying her poor mother would be so much fatigued, if she had the dinner to get ready and the baby to nurse, that she preferred going through the rain, though she had a mile to walk.

“About two months ago, when I had cause to be dissatisfied with her, on account of her negligence in attending school and chapel—a thing formerly so unusual to her, as she was generally first—I called at the cottage to learn the reason. All the family were together. Poor Betsey began to cry as soon as she saw me, for she knew I was come to make complaints. Her father then told me the regulation he had made since his wife's illness—that if she would not get up when she was called, she should be punished by the privation of that which he knew was pleasure to her. I represented to him that it was an injury to the child to keep her from school, and also to himself, as he would lose the benefit of her clothing and appear ungrateful to Lady

Alton, who took so much interest in the improvement of the children.

“ ‘The idle, Mrs. Batty,’ he replied, ‘deserve only to be clothed in rags; and if, with the advantage of learning, she should grow up a lazy, indolent girl, the bounty of Lady Alton would be thrown away, and she would become unworthy of her future notice. My mistress is in bad health; and it is strange if a girl twelve years old will do nothing to help her, and take a little of the burthen off her hands. She has worked very hard, many a long day, to keep her children clean and comfortable; and now, in their turn, they shall work for her. I will have no idlers at home,’ continued he, raising his voice; ‘they must all work, or turn out.’

“ ‘Dear George,’ said the mother, interrupting him, ‘do not be angry—you know how much it distresses me. Have a little patience with our Betsey; she is a good girl in every thing else, and willing to do whatever she is desired. Look round our little place, ma’am,’ addressing herself to me; ‘’tis very clean, and all Betsey’s own doing, for I have not strength to stir about much. Our little flower garden, too, which looks so nice, is cultivated by her at her leisure hours with great care, because she knows how much I enjoy to look at flowers.’

“ ‘Betsey is not idle when she is up,’ said the father, a little softened; ‘and if she would only rise early in the morning, she would be, I know, the best girl in the parish.’

“ ‘Young people, Mr. Kerr,’ I observed, ‘require more sleep than those of greater age.’—He replied, ‘I allow her nine hours for rest—she has often more; and I think that is abundantly sufficient for any one in health, and particularly for such as have their bread to earn.’

“ ‘But you forget, my dear,’ said his wife, ‘that her sleep for the last two months has been much broken, by being obliged to take charge of little Kitty, and often to attend on me.’—‘Ah, mother-like,’ said Kerr; ‘you must excuse the child, though it was the same before you were ill, when she was not disturbed at all. ’Tis a constant failing, Mrs. Batty, and some effort must be made to overcome it.’

“ ‘Can you not,’ said I, ‘excuse it on Sundays, and not hinder her from hearing mass?’—‘I do not hinder her,’ he replied; ‘I know it is of obligation, in their religion, to go

to church in the morning. If, then, my girl knows her duty, let her do violence to her inclinations in order to comply with it, and show her love to God by keeping his commandments. I am not a man of much religion myself, Mrs. Batty; but as my children are Catholics, I wish them to fulfil the duties their religion enjoins. When Betsey thinks fit to rise in the morning, she knows that I not only allow her to go to chapel, but am particular in seeing that she does go, and in good time. There are too many obligations in your church for me to think of becoming a Catholic; but I like some of its practices, and I think, though there are good and bad persons in all religions, that the Catholic youth of this parish are far better conducted than any other.'

"With this we parted; and poor Betsey has been more or less regular in her attendance ever since, as your ladyship knows by yesterday's examination. The child is certainly to be pitied; and I hope, madam, you will make allowance for her."

"I think she is a great favorite with you, Mrs. Batty," said Frances; "and, therefore, you do not perceive her faults. My sisters inform me, that she is not entitled to any clothes at all, so I am sure she must have been very negligent."—"I allow my partiality," replied Mrs. Batty; "but that does not make me blind to her failings. Her amiable disposition, her docility, attention, civility of manners, and affectionate care of her mother, have raised her high in my esteem."

"And in mine also," said Lady Alton. "I admire that humility which induces her to acknowledge her faults, without seeking the least excuse, or ever attempting to throw the blame on others, though she might with great justice have exculpated herself, on the plea of having her sleep repeatedly broken. I wish all my little girls would imitate her," said her ladyship, looking archly on Frances, who was but too apt to palliate her misconduct.

"I should be glad," observed Miss Mordaunt, "if her father was less severe; for perhaps she will be discouraged, and grow indifferent."

"She is too humble for that," resumed her ladyship, "and though I pity her, I cannot blame her father. He is perfectly correct in wishing to accustom his children to habits of early rising, for, in all stations of life, it possesses

innumerable advantages ; while sloth, on the contrary, brings with it an incalculable train of evils."

"To poor people, I easily conceive it does," interrupted Maria, "because, if they are servants or laborers, they are likely to lose their employment, and be in want of bread. But is it of equal consequence to people who are independent?"

"Certainly not of *equal* consequence, because it is not likely to reduce them to poverty. But," continued her ladyship, "it is a great moral evil, as it enervates the mind, injures the constitution, and unfits them for those pursuits by which they might benefit mankind. Ask the learned man and accomplished woman, how they found time to acquire their knowledge, and they will tell you, 'by early rising.' Ask the trader and mechanic, how they made their fortune, and they will answer, that they owe it principally to early rising. Ask the man of prayer, by what means he attained his profound recollection and sublime knowledge of heavenly things, and he also will assure you, that he is indebted for these advantages to early rising."

"How many hours' sleep ought we to have?" asked Miss Mordaunt. "Seven, or, at most, eight hours, are generally considered sufficient to renew our strength, and invigorate our mind. Some constitutions do not require so large a portion. Young children, sick and aged persons, are exceptions from this rule."

"You think, mamma, I suppose," said Maria, "that, by early rising, a person has more time. Would it not be the same thing, if one who dislikes rising early, were to sit up late at night?"—"Not exactly," replied her mother, "though you might count as many hours. Night is the season appointed by the Almighty for repose. All nature shows us the example. Rest, taken at that time, invigorates the body, and refreshes the mind ; later, it weakens both. Morning, moreover, is the period best adapted for study, reflection and labor. As Christians, we have religious duties to perform, which, if neglected in the morning, cannot be properly fulfilled during any other part of the day. Prayers said at noon, by persons in health, cannot, with justness, be called morning prayers. The opportunity of hearing mass, and approaching the holy communion, is lost ; and the mind, by protracted sleep, is too much enervated to be capable of meditation. To the

worldling, these are matters of little import; but, in the eye of the Christian, they are of serious consequence."

"I feel the truth of your observations, mamma," said Frances; "but people who live in the world cannot observe rules like those who dwell in a convent; they would be quite laughed at. If I did not go to bed till one or two o'clock, I conceive that I should not feel disposed, or sufficiently refreshed, to rise at seven; besides, I have been assured, that it would appear completely ridiculous in London, for persons of fashion to get up sooner than ten."

"It is too generally the case, that those who enter into the gayeties of fashionable life, from habitually going late to bed, rise proportionably late in the morning. But do you think, Frances, that this will be a sufficient excuse for the neglect of our Christian duties?"

"No, mamma, but then I would not, on any account, omit my morning prayers; and I have heard you mention yourself, that to hear mass every day is not of obligation; on Sundays, I would certainly take care to be always up in time."—"Many young persons, my dear girl," continued her ladyship, "on their introduction into society, have proposed to themselves to enter very sparingly into the fashionable follies of the age; but at length, from the mistaken idea that they must do as others do, have been insensibly drawn into the vortex of dissipation. Remember, my children, that we cannot faithfully serve two masters, whose interests are quite different—God and the world."

"But would it not be possible, my dear madam," observed Miss Mordaunt, "to keep on terms with both, by endeavoring to avoid what would be particularly offensive to either?"

"Dismiss the supposition, my dear Jane," answered Lady Alton; "it is impossible; or if possible, it is in so limited a degree, that it will require the nicest discrimination to determine how far we may yield, without giving offence. The more we sacrifice to the world, the more it demands of us. Our heavenly Master, jealous of our love, will possess our whole heart, or no portion of it. But we have interrupted Mrs. Batty's history, and I suppose you are tired of the serious conversation into which we have been accidentally led."

"I am not at all tired, mamma," said Frances, "and I

am sure Jane and Maria are not ; so, if you have any thing to add on the subject, pray continue."

"It is indeed surprising, Frances," said her mother, "to hear you acknowledge, that you are pleased in listening to serious discourse ; I cannot, therefore, refuse to indulge you."

"I begin to feel interested when I hear your opinion, mamma, though it is generally in opposition to my own ; but you are kind enough to allow me to express my sentiments, without being angry, because they differ from yours. On this account I enjoy the conversation, though I can never induce you to become a convert to my way of thinking ; and I am sure that, when I live in the world, I shall never be able to think and act as you do."

"The grace of God, my Frances, and your own goodwill corresponding, will enable you to accomplish all that religion will require of you. But to return to our subject. Independently of religious motives for rising early, lying late in the morning, even among rich people, is a moral evil much to be deplored. What will you think of a mother, who is not to be seen by her family before twelve or one o'clock in the day, her children abandoned to the care of servants, without a superintending eye to overlook the conduct of either ? At the breakfast hour, the children are introduced to pay their morning respects, and, after a few inquiries concerning their health, are dismissed to the nursery, with a promise from mamma to visit them very shortly. This she proposes to do ; but with a fashionable lady, the business of giving orders to her milliner and dress-maker, paying and receiving visits, consumes the day till it is time to dress for dinner ; and this meal is taken at so late an hour, that the children are called to desert, when they ought to be going to repose. How can such a mother possess any knowledge of the dispositions of her children ? How can she expect that they should feel much fondness for her, when she shows so little regard and solicitude for them ? In all their little infant sorrows, they are soothed and comforted by their nurse, if they are fortunate enough to have a tender one, and, in return, their affections centre in the servant rather than in the parent. If the nurse be really attached to her charge, or anxious to secure their favor, the children are spoiled by injudicious indulgence. If, on the other hand, she be a woman of a variable temper,



they are subject to all the caprices of her humor ; they acquire her habits, and at length become perverse, impatient and ungovernable."

"But what, mamma," asked Frances, "has this to do with early rising? It appears to me that persons of fortune ought not to be expected to look after their children the same as others, because they can afford to pay servants to undertake that office."

"There is, indeed, no necessity," replied Lady Alton, "for having their children always in their company, as people in the middle walks of life are obliged to have ; but a mother, whatever may be her condition in society, has duties to fulfil from which no rank can exempt her. It is not enough that she is diligent in inquiring for good servants ; she must *see* that they execute the trust reposed in them, otherwise she will be answerable before God for all the ill consequences which may result from their negligence. If, therefore, she rise, we will say, at nine o'clock, she will have at least three hours in the morning to superintend her nursery, or enjoy the conversation of her children in her dressing-room, if they be old enough. How, otherwise, can she ever obtain that knowledge of their dispositions, which may enable her to correct their defects, and strengthen their virtues? And, even then, her precepts will be of little avail, unless supported by good example. Oh ! how many parents will be condemned, at the awful day of judgment, for their neglect of the sacred deposit committed to their charge—the immortal souls of their children! Wonder not, then, my dear girls, that I am so anxious for you to overcome your faults, and acquire virtuous habits, since I cannot but tremble at the recollection of the strict account I shall have to give."

"Dear mamma," said Maria, affectionately taking the hand of her mother, "I hope we shall all live in such a manner, as to contribute to your happiness at that time ; but if not, the fault, I am sure, will not be imputed to you, since you instruct us both by word and example."

Lady Alton was affected, and pressed Maria tenderly to her maternal bosom. Frances and Teresa shared in the fond embrace, and promised that they would endeavor to become every thing their amiable mother desired. Lady Alton recovering herself, and wishing to change the conversation, spoke of the illness of Mrs. Kerr, and inquired

of Mrs. Batty, how it happened, that she had not applied to the housekeeper for assistance.

"She is a very timid woman, my lady," said Mrs. Batty, "and when I assured her, that if she called at the Park, she might have the benefit of a doctor, and whatever else was necessary, she answered, that she and her husband had been thinking about it, but were afraid of being troublesome. This is two months ago, and I have not seen her since; but I believe she continues still very weak and poorly."

"And why, my good woman," resumed her ladyship, "did you not inform me of this before? The bashful and timid must be sought out, and encouraged to make known their wants. This poor creature, perhaps, needs a little wine, and nourishing soup, more than medicine. I am sorry I was not aware of her being unwell two months ago. Do these people live within our domain?"—"Yes, madam."

"Then," continued her ladyship, "I ought to reproach myself for not having become acquainted with them before."—"But your ladyship was in bad health," said Mrs. Batty.—"And out of the country," observed Miss Mordaunt.—"I have been at home above six months, my dear."

"But, mamma," said Frances, "you cannot be expected to know all the people in the neighborhood. The rich would be complete slaves, and derive no advantage from their wealth, if they were always to be thinking of, and pestered with, the wants of the poor."

"My Frances, like many others, speaks without reflection," replied her ladyship. "You have not considered, my love, the duties incumbent on the rich: they are but stewards of the Almighty. What would you think of your father's steward, should he appropriate to his own use the money with which he was intrusted for the payment of others?"

"I should think, mamma, he deserved to be severely punished, because he embezzled the property of his employer; but the estates of rich people are their own."

"Not entirely, Frances," replied her ladyship; "no more belongs to them than what is necessary for maintaining them according to their rank—the remainder is the patrimony of the poor. And be assured, that the affluent will be called to a rigorous account by God, for their abuse of

his bounty in squandering away, in useless trifles, sums which ought to have been advantageously disposed of. It is also greatly to be feared, that, at the day of judgment, the poor will appear as our accusers, for the many miseries they have endured, either because we have unfeelingly refused to succor them, by extravagance put it ought of our power, or, though pride and indolence, neglected to ascertain their wants."

"I think I have heard people say, ma'am," interrupted Miss Mordaunt, "that 'charity begins at home.' Does not this mean, that we are to take care of ourselves first?"—"It does," rejoined her ladyship, "according to the cold, unfeeling interpretation of the world. But the opinion of the world must not be received as the Christian's guide, who, if he expects to be saved, must follow the gospel as his rule."

"Well, I always thought," resumed Frances, "that people of fortune might do what they pleased with their money, without being controlled in the mode of spending it."—"Provided they comply with the demands of moral rectitude," resumed her ladyship, "and owe no man any thing, they are not accountable at the bar of human justice for the manner in which they dispose of their property. But I have already told you, they are but stewards to the Almighty, and are, therefore, responsible to him for the use they make of his gifts. The gospel says, 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.' Nevertheless, it is not riches, but the abuse of riches, that makes them an obstacle to eternal happiness."

"What, then, does the gospel say, mamma, to enforce the duty of charity?" asked Maria. "There is so much pleasure in relieving the wants of others, that a command seems almost needless."—"We are by nature, my dear Maria, so selfish and imperfect, that both promises and threats are necessary, to induce us to perform our duty from *proper motives*; the neglect of which, renders our otherwise good works of no value in the sight of Heaven. A motive of the love of God must influence us in the distribution of our alms, if we expect them to conduce to our salvation. The scripture says, 'Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow turn not away.' 'Lay up to yourselves treasures on earth; for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.' 'As ye would that

men should do to you, do to them in like manner.' 'Be ye merciful, as your heavenly Father also is merciful.' Our Saviour threatens those with eternal perdition who, when he was hungry, gave him not to eat; when he was naked, clothed him not; when he was sick and in prison, did not visit him.

"But, again, he encourages us to be obedient to his commands by these consoling words—'Give, and it shall be given to you again. Good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom; for with the same measure that you mete withal, shall it be measured to you again.' 'If thou wilt be perfect, sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven.'"—

"Oh, mamma! I beg of you no more proofs from scripture," interrupted Frances; "you quite frighten me! Why, according to the last, which I remember to have read in my catechism, papa, as he is very religious, might be induced to sell all his estates, and give the money to the poor, and so leave us destitute."

"Oh make yourself quite easy on that head, my dear Frances!" said Lady Alton, with a smile. "Your father cannot, in conscience, give his property to the poor, and leave his children in want. It is the duty of parents to provide for their offspring, and, according to their ability, for such of their relations as need their assistance. Neither can they, till they have religiously fulfilled these duties, think of complying with the gospel counsel which has so much alarmed you."

"We have not yet heard Mrs. Batty's account of Sally Lindon," said Miss Mordaunt; "shall she now relate it?"—"Not this evening," replied her ladyship; "it is late, and we have already detained Mrs. Batty too long."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

SEVERAL months had passed rapidly on since the arrival of the new governess, and every day endeared her pupils more and more to her; nor were they backward in showing, by attention to her instructions, and obedience to her commands, their increasing esteem. This was more

especially the case with Miss Alton and Jane Mordaunt. Even Frances, unwilling as she was to be subject to control, or to act in opposition to her own will, conducted herself with much greater propriety than heretofore; and though her vanity was no longer encouraged by injudicious praises, her foibles overlooked, or her ill-humor indulged, she felt for Miss Hargrave a degree of respect which she had never entertained for any other governess.

"What a difference I observe," said she one day to Maria, when they were alone, "between our present and former governess!"—"I suppose," answered Maria, "you still regret Miss Belton."

"No indeed!" replied Frances; "I very soon ceased to regret her, and I retain for her now no esteem at all. Miss Hargrave is very much her superior; she is more like mamma."—"I have great reason to be sensible of the difference," rejoined Maria; "but it is ungrateful in you, my dear sister, to show indifference towards Miss Belton, since she was always very kind to you, took unusual pains to improve your talents, and rewarded your application with abundance of caresses and applause."

"That may be; but I did not always set much value on either, for I suspected, now and then, that they were only bestowed to keep me in good humor, and not because I deserved them. Besides, I had not latterly a very high opinion of her judgment; for she always thought, or pretended to think, as I did. Now, Maria, with all my share of vanity, I was not ridiculous enough to suppose that I was always in the right. Again, she wished us to be impressed with the idea that she knew every thing, and by that means was often making blunders."—"Which you, dear Frances, never failed ungenerously to point out. I often wondered she had patience with you."

"She was afraid of me, I believe; for, you know, I frequently told her, that if she behaved to me as she did to you, I would write to mamma, and make complaints; and that then she would be discharged. This produced the desired effect, and she suffered me to act as I pleased."

"Did she prove herself your friend, do you imagine," said the steady Maria, "by such condescension?"—"I was gratified at the time," returned Frances, "because I escaped punishment; but I believe I should have had more reason to love her, had she reprehended me for my mis-

conduct, as she would thus have prevented much of the uneasiness which I have endured since."

"This shows, then, my dear sister," said Maria, "the truth of what mamma often asserts, that they are our best friends, who endeavor with the greatest assiduity to correct our faults."

"Yes; but then they should convince us first that we are wrong, and not punish us out of mere humor, as was often the practice of Miss Belton with regard to you; neither ought they, because one has offended, to be angry with all."

"I am sure, Frances, we give a great deal of trouble to those who instruct us; we ought not, therefore, to criticise their imperfections."—"Oh!" rejoined Frances, haughtily, "they are paid for their services, and what more is due to them?"

"A great deal," said Maria; "mamma has repeatedly declared, that we owe them our love, respect and gratitude; for that the *money* they receive can never renumerate them for their anxiety of mind, and the vexations they meet with from their pupils."

"Mamma thought of me, I suppose," said Frances, coloring, "when she made that remark; but if I was not contradicted, I should not be so frequently in ill humor. I acknowledge that I have faults, but I cannot bear the idea of being scolded out of them."

"Do you then conceive," asked Maria, "that they ought never to be mentioned to you?"—"Not so; but I would rather be treated as a rational being, than be stormed at as if I were not endued with common sense."

"But is my dear sister," resumed Maria, with a smile, "always disposed to listen to reason, and willing to act as she is desired, the moment she is gently spoken to?"—"Ah, Maria! I forgot that I was not formerly so reasonable as I am inclined to be at present; but if my governesses had taken the trouble to address me in the manner which mamma observes, I think I should have received more benefit from their reproofs."

"We must not, I believe," continued Maria, "expect that every one will have the same patience with our defects as our parents, or use the same tenderness in pointing them out; but what is your opinion of our present governess?"

"I cannot but acknowledge that she has gained an

ascendency over me," replied Frances, "which I foolishly imagined no governess should ever possess. She is not indeed severe, but she takes care never to issue commands which she has not the means of enforcing. This was not the case with Miss Belton, who often insisted on my doing what I knew she could not compel me to do against my will; or she threatened me with punishment which she had not the power to inflict. By a little opposition, therefore, on my part, I always got the better of her, and set her threats at defiance."

"This is nothing to boast of, Frances," said Maria; "and I think it will not be your interest to act in the same manner for the future."—"Oh, I soon perceived that," replied Frances; "for I remark that, when Miss Hargrave desires any thing to be done, she spares no pains to see it accomplished; and the more we resist, the more persevering she is, whatever inconvenience it may cause her."

"And can you blame her for endeavoring to maintain her authority?"—"I know she is right," replied Frances, candidly; "and I respect her the more for it, though I sometimes feel great repugnance in submitting to her injunctions. Yet I perceive clearly, that it is not my interest to be obstinate, since she possesses so entirely the confidence of mamma and papa."

"Then do not give her unnecessary trouble. I am persuaded she loves us; and if her orders are sometimes contrary to our inclinations, they proceed not from a desire to exercise her power, but to make us as good and amiable as mamma wishes, and Almighty God requires."

"You need not say *us*, Maria," resumed Frances, affectionately embracing her sister, "because you are submissive to every one. You appear to have no difficulty in doing as you are bid; I, on the contrary, have a great deal."

"Then you will possess much more merit in the sight of God, if you endeavor to overcome this defect; and, by exerting yourself to yield promptly for his sake, I am convinced that every obstacle will soon be removed."

"I do not find it so arduous a task to be obedient to our present governess, as I did to the former, because I have a higher opinion of her judgment. She does not pretend to know *every thing*; and if I ask her to explain any circumstance which she does not clearly understand, she

never hesitates to acknowledge her ignorance, and always refers me to some book which treats of the subject, saying, 'the research will benefit us both, for I discover every day, that I have something new to learn.'"

"She is very amiable," rejoined Maria, "and I love her much. She spares no efforts for our improvement; and whatever she recommends to us in the practice of virtue, she illustrates by her own example. It is also to be observed, that she never deviates from the truth, even in joke, and this good quality entitles her to our implicit confidence."

"And who is so happy as to deserve this honorable eulogium, Maria?" exclaimed Lady Alton, who at that moment opened the door.—"Our governess, mamma," said Frances, with a smile; "Maria is thus eloquent in her praise, because she wishes to exalt her in my esteem. But it will not do; Miss Hargrave is too exact in little matters, which I consider of no importance. Besides, she frequently reproves me, and this, you know, is not the way to induce me to love her."

"I think you must mistake, my Frances," replied Lady Alton; "I am frequently within hearing, and, if I were to judge by her tone of voice, I should conclude that I had excellent children, or that the governess was by far too indulgent."

"I do not mean to assert, mamma," resumed Frances, "that she speaks in a scolding tone of voice; but her commands or prohibitions are so positive, that I always feel myself obliged to obey."

"I am well aware, that obedience is painful to you," rejoined her mother; "but are you ever called upon to obey in matters, which even your own judgment, in your reasonable moments, points out to you as wrong?"—"Oh no, mamma."

"Well, then, my love, would not Miss Hargrave be guilty of cruelty, instead of showing tenderness, were she to pass over your faults, and leave you in the quiet indulgence of your passions? If you do not like to be corrected by your governess, anticipate her reproofs, and eradicate your imperfections yourself. By this means, my dear child, you will become habitually amiable, and not require a stern command, to confine you to the path of duty. I am so thoroughly assured of the competency of Miss Hargrave



for the important task she has undertaken, that I am persuaded, if you will comply with her instructions, and imitate her example, you will quickly realize her most ardent wishes. You will then be no longer so unjust, as to withhold your favorable opinion, but will willingly join with your sister in her praise.

"Gratitude and love are justly due to every one, who endeavors to make you better or wiser than you are. Reflect on this, and do not, by perversity and ill conduct, cause your governess unnecessary solicitude and trouble." "I will exert myself to do better, mamma," replied Frances, "and then every body will be as much pleased with me, as they are with Maria."

"Most undoubtedly, and you will add much to your own, as well as to my happiness; for the virtuous alone enjoy content."

"Did you come here to look for us, mamma?" asked Maria.—"Yes, I heard a very good account of my dear girls, and, therefore, will take them out with me. The carriage is ordered at three; so make haste and get ready."

How few young persons appreciate, as they ought, the care, fatigue and anxiety of those who take upon themselves the important but thankless office of education! How few endeavor, like Maria, to alleviate their burthen, by diligence, obedience and attention to their instructions! Whilst, on the other hand, numbers, like Frances, maliciously turn their teachers into ridicule, condemn their precepts, expose their imperfections, and employ every possible expedient to set their authority at defiance. But how culpable is this conduct! how unamiable does it render them in the eyes both of God and man! Could they but be induced to observe it in its true light, disgusted with the picture, they would instantly have recourse to a very different mode of behavior; such as would tend to their moral interest and respectability in this life, and to their eternal well being in the next.

Were parents in general, like Lady Alton, careful to discourage in their children every expression of complaint against their instructors, the latter would not have half the trouble they usually undergo with their pupils, and the former would not so often be disappointed in their children's improvement.

Whatever may be the opinion of parents, with regard to

the merits of those who are intrusted with the education of their offspring, they should be very cautious not to give utterance to it in their presence, if it be in the least unfavorable. Children are ever ready to adopt the sentiments of those with whom they converse, when such sentiments coincide with their own. If, therefore, they hear their parents speak slightly of their preceptors, they naturally employ the same language, lose confidence in their abilities, disregard their instructions, and, instead of looking up to them with respect and deference, endeavor to depreciate them in the estimation of others, in proportion as they are contemptible in their own. Hence flow innumerable evils, because no real improvement can be expected in pupils who despise or think meanly of their teachers.

Parents can never display too much solicitude in the choice of governesses or tutors; but, when once they are well chosen, every means should be adopted to inspire children with respect for their persons, and deference to their judgment. No appeal should, on any account, be allowed from their authority; and parents themselves, if referred to, should always decide in favor of the teacher, when such decision is not manifestly wrong. Were these principles always acted upon, young persons would be happier under the necessary restraints, parents would be better satisfied with their children's improvement, and instructors would be saved an infinity of trouble.

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## CHAPTER XX.

SHORTLY after the arrival of Miss Hargrave, Lady Alton, who was anxious that Maria should be prepared for her first communion, recommended her to her especial care, as she would be more intimately connected with the governess, than with herself. She also requested, that she would defer any studies of minor consequence, in order to devote more attention to this important duty.

Miss Hargrave, who was exceedingly well instructed, felt the propriety of this recommendation, and entered exactly into all the views of the pious mother. Three months were allotted for preparation. Maria was delighted, on

being informed, that the time was at length fixed, after which she had so long sighed.

"How shall I thank you, dear madam, for the good news you bring me?" said she to her governess, who was the bearer of the intelligence; "but my first communion has been so often deferred, that I am afraid to anticipate so great a blessing, lest something should interfere to prevent it again."

"Every thing in this life is uncertain: yet I know of nothing, my dear Maria, that is likely to frustrate your expectations. You may, therefore, I think, safely indulge the pleasing hope, remembering, however, that much depends upon yourself."

"The latter consideration makes me fearful," said the diffident Maria; "mamma has, I presume, acquainted you with her intention to delay my first communion one month, for every time I neglect to rise at the hour appointed, or omit, through slothfulness, any of my duties. I have repeatedly formed good resolutions, but have as often broken them."

"And yet, since my arrival," observed Miss Hargrave, "you have been very regular and diligent. I do not, therefore, perceive, that you have much cause for apprehension. But tell me, my love, what were the evil consequences of your rising late, that obliged your mamma to make so severe a regulation?"

"Being always very sleepy in the morning (like Betsey Kerr), I was frequently in bed when I ought to have been taking exercise with my sisters. I repeatedly, during the winter, neglected to hear mass, and often put off my morning prayers till after breakfast, or said them in a great hurry, and without attention. These, I knew, were great faults. I was angry with myself for having committed them, and was ill-humored, and out of spirits, the whole of the day."

"That was, indeed, making bad worse," said the governess; "but how did you succeed in breaking yourself of this pernicious habit?"—"Mamma, on her return," replied Maria, "took great pains to convince me of its destructive consequences; she desired me to apply to Almighty God for assistance, and urged my first communion, which had been so long delayed, as a motive that might induce me to overcome my indolence. For this last month, I have succeeded every day; but I am constantly in fear, and shall

now be more so than ever. I will not go to sleep, and then I shall be certain of being prepared to rise in good time."

"I entreat, my dear child, you will not have recourse to any such expedient," said Miss Hargrave; "it would be dangerous to your health, and even defeat your own intention; for the body, exhausted with watching during the early part of the night, would naturally seek repose in the morning, and be more difficult to rouse. Trust, rather, to the aid of Heaven, and your own earnest desires; when your motive is to please God, he will not fail to assist you."

"May I not call Maria in the morning, ma'am?" asked Frances; "I should be sorry if she were to be disappointed."—"No, Frances, I must refuse your good-natured offer," replied the governess, "because it is incumbent on your sister to use her own endeavors; but I will order Susan to take particular care to wake her effectually, and even remind her of the benefit she will lose by self-indulgence. With this, I am sure, she will be contented, and employ her utmost exertions to merit the favor she is so anxious to obtain."

"And now, my dear Maria, permit me to engage a few moments of your attention, while I exhort you to greater diligence than ever in the service of God. Be more than usually watchful over your conduct, and strive to correct your smallest faults. Forget not that you have an important work in hand, nothing less than to prepare within you a habitation for your God; and in proportion as you exert yourself to adorn your soul with those virtues which are most pleasing to him, so will he amply reward your efforts, by giving himself to you, with all spiritual delights."

"Will you suffer me, my dear madam," interrupted Jane, "to share with Miss Alton your kind instructions? I will solicit Mr. Morini very earnestly to allow me to make my first communion with her."

"Are you, then, quite resolved," said the governess, "to become a Catholic?"—"Yes, madam," replied Miss Mordaunt, "I am one already; my mind has been long made up."

"But has it occurred to you, that the religion you propose to embrace, imposes heavier restraints on the passions than those to which you have been hitherto accustomed?—

that it requires great purity of conscience; a strict observance of the commandments; and that, in addition to those delivered to Moses by the Almighty, there are the commandments of the church, which are equally binding? Have you maturely considered the nature of these obligations, and do you think you will be able to comply with them?"—"I will endeavor to do so, with the grace of God," said Miss Mordaunt modestly.

"Have you," resumed the governess, "considered also, that, in a country where Catholicity is not the religion of the state, professing yourself a Catholic will be likely to act as a bar to your advancement in the world, should you depend on your talents for a livelihood, or prevent you from forming an advantageous marriage."

"I have not reflected on these consequences," answered Jane; "but I have weighed attentively these important words in the catechism,—‘What will it avail a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ and these others,—‘There is but one God, one faith, one baptism.’ I am desirous to save my soul, and conceive that I cannot attain this object so securely, as by becoming a member of the Catholic church. I have read the books Mr. Morini has placed in my hands. The passages which I did not understand, he kindly took the trouble to explain; and I feel perfectly convinced, that I am right in the choice I have made, and that I shall never have reason to repent of it. Allow me, then, to participate with my dear Maria in your kind instructions."

"What are the virtues," asked Miss Alton, "that we ought to endeavor most assiduously to acquire?"

"In the first rank I shall place humility, by which we acknowledge ourselves infinitely unworthy of so immense a favor; for what do we receive in the holy eucharist, my dear children? No less a guest than Jesus Christ himself! the Son of the living God! the second person of the most adorable Trinity! What, then, can we, worms of the earth as we are, do to receive worthily so admirable a gift? Certainly nothing. We must, therefore, acknowledge our inability, and confess that, of ourselves, we are unable to perform a single action deserving of his divine acceptance. We must earnestly implore his grace, to assist us in this great work; and entreat him to infuse into our hearts the spirit of humility, which is the foundation of all other

virtues, and without which we never can be welcome guests at his divine table. We will renew this subject some other time. At present I have an engagement, and your company is required in the drawing-room. Adieu."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

"You are sometimes kind enough to entertain us with a story," said Maria, addressing her governess; "will you endeavor to recollect one now? Frances seems out of spirits, and not amused with our conversation."

"The ill-humor which she betrayed this morning, when reproved by your mamma, but little deserves this indulgence. It gave me great uneasiness," continued Miss Hargrave, turning to Frances, whose tearful eye evinced that she was sensible of her error; "it gave me great uneasiness to hear you reply to the tender and gentle remonstrances of your affectionate mother, in the insolent and unfeeling language which you employed. I trust, however, it is the last time there will be occasion to notice so high an aggravation of any fault. Almighty God, in the fourth commandment, strongly enjoins obedience, respect and affection to parents. The law of nature, also, has deeply implanted these duties in the hearts of those who listen to her dictates. Why, then, my dear Frances, do you continue to degrade yourself by these frequent bursts of passion?"—"I am always sorry afterwards," replied Frances, "and vexed with myself for giving way to them. I have begged mamma's pardon, and promised to be more guarded in future."

"Endeavor, then, to act up to your good resolution; and I hope the story, which your conduct this morning has brought to my remembrance, will have the effect of strengthening it. The tale is founded in truth.

### THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF UNGOVERNED PASSIONS.

"Madame de St. Ive inhabited an elegant villa, in the environs of Rouen, surrounded by an amiable family, of which she was at once the ornament and the idol. At the distance of a few minutes' walk resided Madame Aulaire, a widow lady, whose secluded habits rendered her a stranger

to those of her own rank ; while her affability and charity to the poor gained her the respect and admiration of the neighborhood.

"She had one child, a daughter about fourteen years of age, who, according to the reports of the servants, was, in every particular, the reverse of her amiable mother. Henriette (for so she was called) was proud, revengeful and passionate in the extreme, and had shown herself, in many instances, deliberately malicious. As Madame de St. Ive was one morning occupied, as usual, with the instruction of her young family, a servant belonging to Madame Aulaire requested to see her, and, after a short apology for the intrusion, begged she would come to the assistance of her mistress, who was in violent hysterics, brought on by the apprehension that her daughter had drowned herself. 'Do, Ma'am, say all you are able to comfort her,' continued the servant, 'for she is a good lady and an excellent mistress, but I greatly fear we shall lose her : this last blow will certainly be her death.'—'What can have caused this child to commit so rash an act?' demanded the lady.—'Oh, madam,' replied the servant, 'it is her headstrong passions, which she will not strive to conquer. She has repeatedly threatened to destroy herself; but I know her to be a great coward; and though her bonnet and handkerchief were floating on a large deep pond, at the bottom of the garden, it strikes me very forcibly, that she has thrown them there only to frighten us, and has hidden herself at some short distance. I cannot, however, persuade my dear mistress that this is the case, and she gives way to the most violent grief.'

"By this time they had reached the house, and Madame St. Ive found the unhappy mother just recovered from a protracted fit. She wildly asked if they had found her daughter; and on being answered that search was making, and that she would soon be restored to her,—'Yes,' she said, 'but not alive. Oh, my unhappy, my miserable child! what have you done!' Again she relapsed into a state of alarming insensibility. The opinion of the medical gentlemen served but to increase the fears of those who were anxious for her preservation, as her constitution was delicate, and her previously declining health had deprived her of the strength which was necessary to support so severe a blow.

"Madame de St. Ive spent several hours with the

unhappy sufferer, employing every argument that pity and religion suggested, to console and cheer her. In the evening, this charitable lady returned again, and had the pleasure to find her interesting patient calm, though extremely weak. She was also informed, to her great surprise, that Henriette had made her appearance, about an hour before, and thus restored comparative tranquillity to the heart of her afflicted mother.

"Having approached the house unperceived, Miss Aulaire entered the parlor, the usual sitting-room, expecting to see her mother, to whom she proposed offering an apology for the uneasiness she had so wantonly caused her; but what was her astonishment when, instead of her mamma, she beheld two gentlemen, one of whom, she knew, was a physician, who addressed her in no very measured language, and accused her of being the murderer of her parent; explaining, in few words, the disastrous consequences of her unnatural behavior. 'Oh, let me see her—let me convince her I am alive,' exclaimed the terrified girl; 'I will beg her pardon; indeed, I did not mean any thing more than to frighten her.'

"'You will not have the pleasure of frightening her again, young lady,' said the elder gentleman (preventing her at the same time from opening the door); 'you have inflicted the fatal stroke, and our utmost skill will not be able to restore her. Tell me, I entreat, the motive that prompted you to act so wickedly. Your mother has, I observe, been long in a declining state, and a few months would, in all probability, have terminated her existence, without adding to your already criminal conduct, the guilt of causing a premature death.'

"'Oh spare me! spare me!' cried Henriette, in an agony of grief. 'Let me see my dear mamma—indeed I did not think it would make her ill. Let me see her, and ask her forgiveness. I *will* go to her,' she continued, raising her voice, and endeavoring, with her usual violence, to force her way.

"'At your peril stir from hence,' said Dr. Muth, in a commanding tone. 'As you value the few remaining days of your now apparently lamented mother, remain here till she has been apprized of your safety—you shall then see her.'

"Awed by his authority, and humbled by the exposure



and alarming consequences of her faults, she quietly submitted; and on being again interrogated as to what had become of her for so many hours, she, after a little hesitation, replied, 'I had been for a considerable time teasing mamma to let me have a watch and certain trinkets which she possesses, but does not use. She told me, I should receive them when I had completed my sixteenth year. I importuned her, again and again, to change her determination, but to no purpose. Being invited to a juvenile party in the neighborhood, I became more anxious than ever for these ornaments. I caressed and abused my dear mamma by turns; but finding that nothing could prevail, I assured her that I would go and drown myself. I often had recourse to this stratagem before, and generally with success; but, to-day, mamma was not to be intimidated, and still persevered in refusing me. On this I became so enraged, that I resolved to do effectually that which, on previous occasions, I had merely threatened, in order to vex her.

" 'I quitted the parlor hastily, and went up stairs, that mamma might think I was in my room; but, after a few minutes, snatching up my hat, I descended gently, and slipped, unperceived, into the garden, still determined to execute my project. When I reached the edge of the pond, which I knew was very deep, my courage failed me. I could not consent to die; but I threw in my bonnet and handkerchief, and then carefully concealed my person behind some straw in a neighboring barn. After remaining there about half an hour, I heard my name repeatedly called, and exulted in the trouble I occasioned. I thought within myself that, for the future, every one would allow me to have my own way, lest I should serve them the same trick again.

" 'While I was in my hiding place I fell asleep, and that has occasioned my long absence. I did not suppose the result would have been so injurious to mamma—do, dear sir, do endeavor to save her life!'

" 'Worthless girl!' exclaimed the doctor indignantly; 'your reign of tyranny will soon be at an end. All the treasures of your mamma, with which you are so anxious to adorn your person, will speedily be yours; but, in losing her, you will lose your only friend. Be assured that none but a mother, and such a mother as you are about to be

deprived of, could possibly bear with you ; and unless you effectually change your conduct, you will become an out-cast from society.

“ ‘Indeed, indeed I will try to mend,’ said the now humbled girl.—‘You will do well,’ returned the doctor, coolly ; ‘and happy will you be, if you are not overtaken by the justice of God before you become thoroughly sensible of the enormity of your guilt, that, by timely repentance in this life, you may be spared the everlasting punishment of the next.’ He now conducted the weeping Henriette to her mother, and a reconciliation took place.

“ Madame Aulaire, though now restored to peace of mind, was so much weakened by the shock she had received, that it was not in the power of medicine to re-establish her health ; and, notwithstanding the most unwearied attention on the part of the physicians and her own servants, she, in a few days, breathed her last. She died in the most edifying sentiments of piety and resignation ; humbly acknowledging, that she considered all she had suffered as a just punishment from Heaven. To make, if possible, a lasting impression on the mind of her daughter—to atone, by public self-accusation, for the multiplied errors of her youth, and in the hope that the effects of her misconduct might serve as a warning to undutiful children, she proposed to relate the history of her early years. Accordingly, the day before she died, being free from pain, she requested Madame de St. Ive, who scarcely ever quitted her apartment, to send for her daughters, in order that they might benefit by her experience ; and, in fulfilling the duties they owed to their parents, secure to themselves, and to their children, the blessings promised by the Almighty to those who love him and keep his commandments.

“ ‘My beloved Henriette (for you are dear to my heart, notwithstanding your folly), and you, young ladies, who have but just entered a world which I am on the point of quitting at the early age of thirty-five, listen attentively to what I shall relate. My little history will not detain you long, but it may teach you an important lesson.

“ ‘My parents were of respectable rank, and independent fortune ; but their union was made unhappy by a great dissimilarity of temper. At the expiration of a few years, my mother was left a widow, with two daughters—myself, and a sister about two years older.

“ ‘Being of rather delicate health, I was much indulged in my infancy. My eyes were weak, and my disposition was, therefore, studied in every particular, lest I should fret and render them still worse. If I began to cry, I obtained whatever I wanted ; and my passions, naturally impetuous, acquiring strength with my age, I became at times absolutely ungovernable. While my father lived, his violence repressed mine ; but my affectionate mother, whose tenderness could not refuse me any thing that was not injurious to my health, gratified all my wishes, to the utmost extent of her ability. Fatal indulgence ! But I exonerate my dear mother from blame : it was circumstances, rather than inclination, that often prevented her from punishing me as I deserved. Ah, what an ungrateful return did I make, for many years, to her unwearied care and tenderness !

“ ‘No servant would submit to my insolent and overbearing temper ; we were continually changing, and frequently left without any attendant at all. My mother at last gave up her house, and engaged lodgings. There I caused so much confusion, when in a passion, by stamping, screaming and shutting the doors with violence, that our landlord threatened to turn us out ; and had it not been that my mother was much respected, and that her payments were very liberal, no person would have accommodated us a single month.

“ ‘At eleven years of age I was a perfect dunce ; not for want of talent, as I was blessed with good abilities, but because my indolence and perverse temper proved an invincible obstacle to the efforts of those who were appointed to instruct me. No governess would consent to live in our family, as my mother was too tender of me to allow her that authority which would have been required, in order to keep me in subjection. I was fond of music, dancing and drawing ; but my dislike to application prevented me from making any improvement in these pursuits. When I was not in the humor to receive my lesson, I exerted all my ingenuity to hinder my sister from profiting by hers. I suddenly shook the table, made a noise, endeavored to spoil her work, and had recourse to a thousand malicious expedients to gratify my spite, and torment my mother. My sister and I were perpetually wrangling about some trifle which neither cared for ; and as I was too headstrong

to give up a point, Louisa, who was the more tractable, was always obliged to yield. My dear mother led a miserable life between us; but I was, beyond comparison, worse than my sister.

“ ‘When free from the excitement of my passions, no child could be more interesting and agreeable. I was affectionate and obedient to my mother, polite and obliging to all around me; but when I was under the control of my evil propensities, there could not be, with the exception of my own unhappy daughter, an object more hateful and degraded. Miserable myself, it was my constant endeavor to torment others; and nothing enraged me more than to perceive, that my grimaces and insulting remarks made no impression on those whom they were intended to annoy. My affectionate mother, always the victim of my caprice, was reduced to a skeleton by anxiety of mind: she trembled both for my body and my soul, seeing that I feared neither God nor man. My language, when I was carried away by passion and ill-humor, was that of the most abandoned of mankind. I did not hesitate to swear; and there were no epithets, how opprobrious soever, that I did not, in those unhappy moments, apply to the Author of my being.

“ ‘You will wonder, my dear young ladies,’ continued the interesting Madame Aulairé, who, during this recital, was bathed in tears, ‘where a child, respectably brought up, could have acquired language which I am ashamed to repeat; but let this truth be early and deeply impressed on your memory, that when once we forfeit the grace of God, and give way to the indulgence of our passions, the devil takes possession of our souls, and suggests every species of evil.

“ ‘I frequently threatened to cast myself out of the window, or over the balustrades of the staircase. Sometimes I would seize a knife or pair of scissors, and, rushing into another room, fasten the door, and alarm the whole house for my safety. To injure myself in reality, however, was not my intention, for I did not love pain; but I wickedly delighted in terrifying my mother, and every one who appeared anxious for my welfare.

“ ‘It would tire you were I to describe more of my follies; but till I had completed my twelfth year, such I was, and perhaps even worse than I have represented. Daily

have I since blessed the mercy of Heaven, which so long endured my reiterated provocations, and forbore to strike the blow that would have plunged my soul into hell, and have condemned me to the eternal torments I so richly deserved.'

"Here Madame Aulaire paused, as if she did not propose to say any thing more. Her friend, however, urged her to proceed, remarking, that the task she had imposed on herself would be incomplete, unless she favored them with an account of her conversion.

" 'In the hope,' replied Madame Aulaire, 'that it may inspire my Henriette with a wish to reform her conduct, and, provided that wish be sincere, induce her not to despair of success, however inveterate her bad habits, I will endeavor to continue my little narrative.

" 'One day, after a violent paroxysm of rage and ill-humor, which had lasted some hours, my mother, quite exhausted and heart-broken, went out alone, contrary to her usual custom, and left me in the house by myself. Provoked at being refused permission to accompany her, when such was my desire, I vented my passion on the inanimate objects that surrounded me, till, wearied and overcome with my own exertions, I threw myself into a chair, and burst into tears. I had not been long in this state, before my solitude was interrupted by the entrance of an old friend of my mother's, who expressed her surprise at finding me alone. It was not necessary to relate the cause, as it was easily discovered by the traces which passion had left on my expressive countenance. To her kind inquiries after the health of my afflicted mother, I replied, in a sullen tone, that she was well enough, but always complaining.

" 'Unfeeling girl!' she cried; 'and who has given her reason to complain, but yourself? Tremble at the account you will have to render before God, for the uneasiness you have brought upon her, and the sins you may have occasioned her to commit, by your unwarrantable opposition to her commands.'

" 'She then represented to me, in forcible terms, the heavy denunciations of the Almighty against undutiful children, and the misery they entailed on themselves in this life, as well as in the next.

" 'Perceiving that I was about to make some opposition to her remonstrances by stopping my ears, a method I

frequently had recourse to, when I did not wish to hear ‘a sermon,’ as I denominated all kinds of instruction, she gently took my hands, and entreated me to listen to her.

“ ‘I lent, at first, an unwilling ear. She contrived, however, to portray the torments of hell, and the misery I should there endure, in colors so striking, that her discourse riveted my attention. She assured me, that my tongue would be punished for its wicked and abusive expressions, by being incapable of uttering a single word, except blasphemy against the living God, and execrations against myself; that my ears, which had hitherto refused to attend to good advice, would be continually annoyed by hearing the most appalling sounds, and recriminating language. In fine, not to exhaust your patience, suffice it to observe, that she described the torments of the wicked in terms so powerfully impressive, that, terrified at the prospect of my future state, I entreated her to desist, and promised amendment.

“ ‘I had often been threatened with the punishment of hell; but it had never before been depicted to me in such a manner as seriously to arouse my apprehensions. Finding me subdued by fear, my good friend changed her tone. She sought to awaken my sensibility, and excite me to contrition, by representing what my divine Redeemer had endured on my account. Her words made an indelible impression on my memory. ‘Our blessed Lord,’ she continued, ‘offering himself up as a victim, to the eternal Father, for the sins of the whole world, and for each individual, the sight of the multiplied iniquities of his ungrateful creatures, was so dreadful to his infinite purity and holiness, that it threw him into an agony of sorrow so overwhelming, as to bedew his sacred body with a sweat of blood—an effect which grief was never known to produce before. Although Jesus Christ foresaw all the torments he should endure, in order to satisfy the justice of God, provoked by our crimes;—although he was aware, that few, comparatively, would avail themselves of the redemption which he was to purchase at so high a price;—nevertheless, out of his tender love, and his earnest desire of our salvation, he cheerfully submitted to the most cruel of deaths, that, taking advantage of his ample atonement, we might enjoy an eternity of bliss in his heavenly kingdom. Will you then, my dear child,’ she continued, ‘resign all hopes of heaven? Are you resolved

to be numbered among those unhappy wretches, who obstinately refuse to profit by his blood? Your Saviour has been once nailed to the cross for you;—why do you seek to crucify him again by your deliberate sins? What barbarity! what ingratitude!’ Having awakened my sensibility, and softened me into tears of compunctious sorrow, she led me to desire an effectual reconciliation with my offended God, and consoled me with the hope of being forgiven, provided I would faithfully correspond to the calls of divine grace, and employ strenuous exertions to reform my conduct.

“ ‘I was so much affected by the arguments of my kind friend, that I made, on the spot, a firm resolution to use my utmost endeavors to overcome my violent temper.

“ ‘My mother, on her return, was surprised to behold, overwhelmed with grief and affliction of spirit, the child whom she had left, three hours before, a prey to the most ungovernable passion. I threw myself at her feet, to implore forgiveness, not, as on other occasions, through mere form, to avoid censure, or accomplish some favorite object, but with sincere purposes of reforming my life. Convulsive sobs choked my utterance; I could not speak. My tender parent raised, and embraced me, mingling her tears with mine. I now began gradually to correct my faults, though not without severe combats, and occasional relapses. My resolution, however, was unshaken; the grace of God, for which I fervently prayed, enabled me to persevere, and by the end of twelve months, I made my first communion.

“ ‘From that happy period, I became quite an altered being, and, deeply conscious of the enormity of my past guilt, I thought I could never be sufficiently grateful to the infinite Mercy of God, which had so patiently awaited my return, and forborne to cut me off in the midst of my sins.

“ ‘At the age of nineteen, a lucrative match was proposed to me. The gentleman was not my choice, but my heart being disengaged, I yielded to the pressing solicitations of my mother, and became the wife of a man who, I soon found, was not calculated to render me happy. Having begged of Almighty God to punish me in this life rather than in the next, for the multiplied sins of my youth, I endeavored to bear, in the spirit of penance, the afflictions and crosses I repeatedly met with, always acknowledging, that they were far less than I deserved.

“ ‘ At the end of a few unhappy years, death released me from the misery of living with a husband, whose temper and inclinations were continually at variance with my own. My sufferings, however, did not terminate with the death of Monsieur Aulaire. In our only child, my Henriette, then seven years of age, he left behind the counterpart of himself. Doatingly fond of her, he never allowed me to control her will, but blindly gratified her most capricious desires. At length her passions, naturally violent, gained so great an ascendancy, that she became unbearable, even to himself; and when the evil was too firmly established to be overcome, he admitted the folly of his excessive indulgence. She had a strong aversion to go to school, and being now my only companion, I did not wish to part with her. Hoping, however, that the salutary restraint which school discipline imposes, might tend, in some degree, to curb her impetuosity, I sacrificed my inclinations, and placed her in a convent a few miles off. The good nuns bore with her for six months, employing every means in their power to subdue her violence, but in vain; and they at length requested I would take her back.

“ ‘ I then engaged a governess at home, but could seldom prevail on one to continue in the family more than a few months. In this unsettled manner, four years passed away, till Henriette’s character became, in the end, so generally known, that no governess would undertake to live with her. I had then no other resource than to employ masters, and endeavor to finish her education myself; but her irritable temper has proved an insuperable bar to her improvement. By degrees, she affronted the whole circle of my acquaintance; even my most intimate friends abandoned me, on her account, and I was left alone to drag out a wearisome existence. Two years ago, as my health was much impaired, I resolved to quit Paris, and finding this secluded cottage, I determined to make it my future residence. In fulfilling the duties of religion, in acts of beneficence and charity to the poor, I have humbly endeavored to prepare for my appearance before him, who has so justly, yet so mercifully, punished me for the sins of my childhood and youth. Beware, young ladies,’ she continued, ‘ of disobeying, miscalling, or in any manner ill-treating your parents; for if Almighty God has promised abundant blessings to virtuous children, so has he denounced the



severest judgments upon the undutiful. Behold in me a terrible example, and I fear you will trace its direful effects in my misguided daughter, unless she speedily reform her conduct. The heavy chastisements of the Almighty are not always so visible as they have been in regard to me and mine, but they are not the less certain; and, when reserved for the next life, they are infinitely more severe. Adieu, my friends; my little strength is now nearly exhausted, and I wish to be left alone.'

"Madame de St. Ives, with many expressions of gratitude, thanked the dying lady, for the instructive lesson her narrative afforded to her daughters, and, promising to renew her visit the next day, bade her an affectionate farewell. The following day never arrived for Madame Aulaire, and her newly-acquired friend learned, with deep regret, that she breathed her last a few hours after she had quitted her.

"Henriette bitterly lamented, for some time, the death of her affectionate mother; but the impression it made, was not salutary enough to cause any permanent change in her behavior. Her efforts to overcome the faults of her temper were too weak to repress its violence: and instead of imitating her amiable parent, by perseverance in her virtuous resolves, she yielded instantly to the storms that rose within her, because her self-love would have been too grievously wounded by strenuous endeavors to resist them.

"Her guardians placed her at school, but there she was not happy. She found no patient mother to bear with defects which she did not strive to overcome. The continual opposition and excitement to which she was subjected, tended but to irritate her the more, and at length she became insupportable to herself and others. Her health, too, being much affected by these repeated conflicts, the governess requested that she might be removed from school. At the age of twenty-one, she became her own mistress, when her guardians joyfully resigned their trust, thankful to be relieved from so troublesome a charge."

"I hope," interrupted Frances, her eyes filling with tears, "you do not imagine that I shall become so detestable a character as Henriette?"—"No, my love," replied Miss Hargrave, "I entertain a far more favorable opinion of you; for I feel assured, that you will endeavor, at once,

to correct your faults, and subdue every inclination to evil. I only wish to point out the fatal consequences of suffering children to indulge their headstrong passions, and to convince you, that it is the duty of parents, and all who are intrusted with the care of youth, to correct their violence of temper, and other vicious propensities; and that it is a proof of very culpable weakness, to spare the rod, or suitable punishments, at an age when the character is easily formed to habits of either vice or virtue."

"Will you have the goodness to tell us," asked Maria, "what became of Henriette?"

"She lived single to an advanced age, but having never subdued her unfortunate irritability of disposition, she was daily subject to all the inconveniences and insults which it is so well calculated to provoke. She was unable to keep a house, because no servants would remain in her employ; and few persons would consent to receive her a second time into their lodgings, though she was always most just and honorable in her payments. She usually passed the winter in town, and the summer at some place of fashionable resort in the country; but every succeeding year, she was found in a different habitation, and no sooner did she take up her abode in it, than peace fled in terror away. Wrapped up in herself, and very tenacious of the respect which, she considered, was due to her station in life, she could never agree long with any acquaintance, as few were willing to pay her all the homage she required. Her company, therefore, was generally shunned. She often lamented, in terms of the bitterest self-reproach, the indolence and self-love which in early youth she had so obstinately indulged, contrary to the admonitions of the best of mothers; and she reprobated, in the severest manner, the false tenderness of a father, who had, by improper deference to her wishes, been the original cause of all her misery. As she lived without being loved, so she died without being regretted, a warning to headstrong and undutiful children."

This story made a great impression on the mind of Frances, and whenever she was disposed to be untractable or disobedient, the governess had only to mention the name of Henriette, and she generally endeavored to subdue the rising passion, and yield peaceably to her commands.

## CHAPTER XXII.

WHEN an opportunity again occurred of introducing the subject which was ever uppermost in the thoughts of Miss Alton, she reminded the governess of her promise to converse on it. She added, that Jane had been longing, as well as herself, for the moment when they might ask a few questions, and receive the benefit of her advice.

"It affords me much pleasure, my dear children, to witness your eagerness to perform, in a becoming manner, that duty which requires all your care, and which will, in the end, so well repay your exertions. What is to be now the particular subject of our conversation?"

"In your former instruction," said Miss Mordaunt, "you pointed out humility as the groundwork of every other virtue. Does not humility consist in having a low opinion of ourselves?"

"It does," replied Miss Hargrave; "but this disposition, though the basis of that virtue, is far from being its most essential characteristic. It requires, in the second place, that we be willing that others also should think meanly of us; and, thirdly, that we love and seek humiliations for God's sake. This third degree is the perfection of humility, to which, comparatively, few aspire. The first and second are indispensable."

"Is not humility a virtue very difficult to attain?" resumed Miss Mordaunt. "I fear I shall never possess the two first requisites, and the third strikes me as being utterly impracticable; yet you say, this virtue is absolutely necessary to enable a person to make a good communion."

"And I repeat the assertion, my dear child," rejoined the governess; "never, without a large portion of this admirable virtue, can we worthily partake of the 'bread of angels!' Do not, however, alarm yourself. The very apprehension that you should be deficient in this virtue, is a satisfactory proof that you already possess it in a considerable degree. Have confidence in God; he never requires any thing that he does not give us the means of accomplishing. His grace, with our diligent co-operation, will speedily enable us to lay this foundation-stone, on which the superstructure of all other virtues must be raised."

"The necessity of cultivating this virtue," interrupted

Maria, "does not diminish the labor, or remove the difficulty, which, I fear, I shall experience in acquiring it."

"But what is there so terrible in it, my dear Maria," resumed the governess with a smile, "that you also should be thrown into alarm? The greater the difficulty, the more splendid will be the reward; and the hope of recompense, you know, sweetens labor. I am, however, happy to observe, that you are not, my dear pupils, quite strangers to the effects of this virtue, though you may not have formed a precise idea of the meaning of the term which expresses it. Your ready submission to all the commands of your superiors, and your willingness to adopt their opinions in preference to your own, are a certain proof of what I say."

"Has this any connection with humility?" asked Maria. "I supposed that it was merely obedience."—"It may be called obedience," resumed Miss Hargrave; "but it has its source in humility. Pride seeks in all things the gratification of self—it loves not to obey; it maintains with asperity its own sentiments, how erroneous soever they may happen to be. Humility, on the other hand, complies cheerfully, and without opposition. Hitherto, my dear children, your naturally flexible tempers have, perhaps, induced you to be submissive. In future, as a remote preparation for your first communion, let your conduct be actuated by a noble motive; give up your own will, and yield immediately, from a desire to please God. For the exterior appearance of humility will have no value in the sight of Heaven, unless we cultivate this excellent virtue in our hearts, and allow it to acquire supreme dominion over us."

"What, then, will be its effects, dear madam?" asked Miss Mordaunt.—"It will teach us to know ourselves, and this knowledge will prevent us from appropriating to ourselves that which is not ours. We shall readily confess, that our talents, our riches, our rank, our very virtues, originate not in any merit of our own, but are gifts of the Almighty, bestowed gratuitously upon us, in common with our fellow creatures, in such proportion as he, in his wisdom, judges expedient. Of what, then, shall we be proud, since we possess not, of ourselves, one single qualification to entitle us to the esteem of either God or man?"

"But how very difficult it will be to obtain these senti-

ments," said Maria; "we are naturally so much inclined to think favorably of ourselves."

"*Self-love*, I am well aware," replied Miss Hargrave, "is our predominant failing. It is a subtle enemy, against which we must warily guard, to the latest moment of our lives—an enemy that never sleeps, but is constantly on the watch to surprise us, even in the performance of our most virtuous actions. Against its deep-laid snares, humility is our only sure defence."

"I perceive, then," observed Miss Mordaunt, "that humility is indispensable, and that we must endeavor to obtain it, whatever the effort may cost."—"You are right, my love," resumed Miss Hargrave; "it is the queen and mistress of all virtues. Lay but a solid foundation of humility, and every other virtue will be acquired with comparatively little effort. Invoke daily, therefore, the assistance of divine grace, without which, you know, we are incapable of any good. Place yourselves under the especial patronage of the ever-blessed Virgin, and beg of her to obtain for you a large portion of this her favorite virtue, which tended more than any other to raise her to the high dignity of Mother of God."

"I should think," said Jane, "that the labor which is requisite for the attainment of this virtue must, in the beginning, be exceedingly severe."—"Undoubtedly; because it is ever at variance with our darling passions. That pride which is inherent in our nature, that self-complacency, that love of praise and admiration, of which it is so difficult to divest ourselves, meet with continual opposition from humility. Nor must we ever imagine, that we shall be able to lay down our arms on this side the grave; for the devil, like a hungry lion expecting his prey, is ever on the watch to seize upon us in an unguarded moment; and though he may, in the first instance, obtain but a trifling advantage, he will not fail to exult over us, and lay deeper schemes to effect our ruin. Against his snares humility will prove a shield of defence; for he has little power over a soul that mistrusts itself, and places all its hope and confidence in God."

"I hope, dear madam," said Miss Mordaunt, "the pains you have taken to convince us of the necessity of this virtue, will not be fruitless. I will endeavor to profit by your advice. Maria will, I am sure, be beforehand with

me, because she has fewer faults to contend with.”—“No, dear Jane; on the contrary, I shall need your good example, to spur me on, and excite me to perseverance and diligence.”—“Strive, my dear children,” rejoined Miss Hargrave, “mutually to assist each other, and you will find the path easier, and more pleasant, than you have ventured to anticipate. Our divine Lord is so bountiful a Master, that all who engage heartily in his service, are amply compensated, even in this life, for the sacrifices they may make in their efforts to please him.”

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### CHAPTER XXIII

“You are thoughtful this afternoon, my dear Maria,” said Miss Hargrave to her beloved pupil, as they were sitting at work, according to their usual custom. “May we know the nature of your reflections?”

Maria blushed on being thus called upon to reveal the workings of her mind, but recovering herself, she modestly answered,—“I was wishing to ask you a question on a subject which has lately occupied my thoughts, but was apprehensive you would consider it a foolish one, or deem it intrusive on the present occasion.”

“Never, my dear Maria,” replied the governess, “suffer a moment’s uneasiness from the fear of communicating any idea that presents itself. Speak your sentiments freely, and be assured that I shall neither reprove nor criticise you. My wish is to instruct; and I am confident that your amiable heart does not entertain any improper feelings. What is it, my love, you wish to know?”

“The conversations we have had on the subject of humility, and the great pains you have taken to inculcate that virtue, have frequently suggested the thought, that to *excel* in any branch of education might lead me to indulge in sentiments of pride and self-complacency, from the compliments it would occasion me to receive. Would it not be better, therefore, for the sake of humility, to be indifferent about those accomplishments which are called superficial, such as music and drawing, for example?”

“The same ideas, also, occasionally occur to me,” said Miss Mordaunt, “and I have at times blamed myself, for

my application to overcome some difficult passage in a music lesson; while, on the other hand, I was aware that, if I did not use my utmost efforts to improve, you would censure me for my negligence."

"These thoughts, my dear children, are but a temptation of the enemy, to render you careless in the discharge of your duty. Almost every pursuit to which we devote our attention may become a subject of self-complacency, or a means of elevating our heart to God, according to the motives by which we are actuated."

"Teach us, if you please," said Maria, "in what manner we may sanctify our studies, and prevent them from being prejudicial to our salvation."—"According to the rank in life in which Divine Providence has placed us," answered the governess, "each has respective duties to perform, and the education of youth must be directed to the particular object in view."

"Miss Mordaunt is required to prepare herself for the office of teaching, and it, consequently, becomes her duty to endeavor to attain the highest degree of excellence in all those branches of learning, in which she will be called upon to instruct others. By neglecting, therefore, the cultivation of her talents, though, from the motives you suggest, she would prove herself actuated by a false humility, and would incur the displeasure of Almighty God, in thus counteracting the designs of his providence in her regard."

"It appears very evident from your kind explanation," said Maria, "that it is incumbent on Jane to apply to the study of fashionable accomplishments; but can you show that it is equally or at all desirable for me?"

"Yes, my love, I shall, I hope, be able to convince you, that you may pursue your favorite recreation of drawing, and attend with equal diligence to music, and other branches of art and science, without endangering your future happiness or destroying that particular grace which you are now anxious to cultivate in your soul. Persons who are secured by fortune from the necessity of earning their bread, are, by no means, privileged by the laws of God to pass their lives in idleness. It is, therefore, proper that, in their youth, they acquire such accomplishments, suited to their rank, sex and talents, as may, when they are freed from the control of teachers, enable them to spend their time in an advantageous manner, prevent that *ennui* which

results from indolence, and which they generally seek to dissipate by useless visits, and promiscuous novel reading: practices at once destructive both of morals and of piety. To avoid this rock, on which so many are shipwrecked, diligently cultivate, my dear girl, those talents which the Almighty has bestowed upon you. Endeavor, also, to lay up a plentiful store of such knowledge as will improve your mind, and adorn your heart with virtuous sentiments. History, under the various heads of sacred, ecclesiastical, ancient, modern and natural, presents an extensive field, which, if judiciously cultivated, will become a sort of durable aliment, on which the understanding and memory will delight to feed, when sickness, age, or other circumstances, shall render exterior accomplishments useless."

"Is it necessary for me," interrupted Maria, "to be as well versed in every department of learning, as if I were destined to teach it?"—"No," replied Miss Hargrave, "certainly not; it is enough that you understand any branch of science sufficiently for your amusement, and your ordinary occupations, without laboring to fathom all its depths and intricate windings. With regard to music, I should not consider it essential to employ your time in the abstruse study of 'Thorough Bass,' or even to devote more hours to practise than may enable you to execute agreeably, and with taste, a few well-chosen pieces for your own entertainment, and that of your select friends: for it should never be the aim of a young lady to exhibit before a large assembly, or place herself on a level with professional performers. That excellence which in them is a merit, would in her be a defect."

"How a defect?" asked Frances with some surprise.—"Because, if she were a young lady of weak understanding, and fond of hearing herself complimented, she would employ so much of her time in acquiring and sustaining this pre-eminence, that she must unavoidably neglect the embellishments of her mind, and perhaps omit, on many occasions, her Christian duties."

"To escape this danger, then," said Maria, eagerly interrupting her governess, "would it not be better to feel indifferent whether we play well or ill?"—"By no means," resumed Miss Hargrave; "for to make mistakes through ignorance, would show great inattention, either on your part, or that of your masters; and to commit wilful blun-



ders, would betray an unpardonable want of respect towards those whom you had been solicited to amuse. Remember, whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. Whilst, therefore, I caution you against the dangerous wish to shine in public, I would equally exhort you to endeavor to become an ornament to society, by the judicious direction of your talents. Aim at excellence according to your ability, but not at superiority. If you have an agreeable voice, cultivate it; learn to sing with taste and judgment, and never refuse to your friends the pleasure of hearing you when they desire it, because you are conscious that you possess not the powers of a Catalani or a Stephens.

"Dancing is a healthful and an amusing exercise; it confers an easy carriage and graceful movement. Attend to it, therefore, that you may not be ridiculed for your awkwardness; but do not aspire to rival an opera-dancer."

"This is intended as a hint for me, I suppose," said Frances, interrupting Miss Hargrave. "I am aware that you think I have taken more pains with this accomplishment than is necessary; but I am so fond of dancing."

"I did not allude to you, my love, but spoke only in general terms. You may, however, profit by the remark, and moderate your ambition to be distinguished in the ball-room. You may continue to like dancing; but let it be for the innocent exercise and social amusement which it affords, and not from a wish to eclipse, or be admired by, others. An action, indifferent in itself, may become criminal, from the motive which governs us in the performance of it."

"Have you any thing further to observe on dancing?" rejoined Maria, willing to prolong a conversation in which she felt much interested. "I believe, my love," replied Miss Hargrave, "I have said all that is requisite on that subject; but I will make a few observations on other matters. Study the grammar of your native tongue with as much attention as will enable you to speak and write very correctly. Extreme refinement in this particular is unnecessary for persons of your rank in life, and it might lead to pedantry and affectation. Arithmetic is a science which I entreat you will cultivate with particular care, as I am sorry to observe that, hitherto, you have greatly neglected it. Apply, therefore, diligently, until you have learned

the first four rules, simple and compound : these you will generally find sufficient for all your purposes ; but the want of this knowledge would be a great defect in your education, and render you liable, in your commerce with the world, to be often imposed on."

"Well, I will indeed," replied Maria, "begin to pay more attention to this study. I am not very fond of ciphering, and I foolishly imagined, that it was not at all requisite for persons in our station. But I conceive I may, by and by, have money at my disposal, and am sure you will advise me to keep an account of the manner in which I spend it."—"I certainly shall exhort you to do so," returned Miss Hargrave, "that your expenses may not exceed your income."

"I request you to inform me, dear madam," said Maria, "what our sentiments ought to be, if you, our parents, or friends, compliment us for any of our performances which you may think well executed. Are we obliged, in order to preserve humility, to check every emotion of pleasure, and strive to depreciate what we have done?"

"Undoubtedly not, my love ; true humility demands no such sacrifices. If your studies are directed by proper motives, enjoy the innocent and refined pleasure arising from the approbation of those whom you love and respect, when you have reason to believe, that they commend you from judgment, and in order to encourage you to still further exertions. Humility will teach you not to consider such applause as justly your due, but will suggest to your heart the propriety of referring the honor to that Almighty Being, who has given you the talents to please. You will, accordingly, pour forth your gratitude to him for all the blessings you enjoy, acknowledging that they are his gifts, and that to him alone belongs the glory."

"In what manner," said Miss Mordaunt, "can we sanctify our studies, so as to make them serve as a part of our preparation for communion?"—"By attending to them," answered the governess, "as we are counselled in the catechism ; that is, by performing all our ordinary actions with a view to please God, and by often raising up our hearts to him, whilst we are engaged in them. For example, when you are going to practise music, can you not, silently and without being perceived, direct your thoughts to the Almighty, and beg that every note you

strike, may be to him an act of jubilation, desiring to join with the celestial choirs in the harmonious strains, with which they constantly salute the great Creator?

"Can you not, when copying a beautiful flower or some tempting fruit, thank him for that tender love, which has not only considered the real wants of man, but contributed so largely to the pleasure of the senses? If you are employed in tracing a landscape from nature, let not your delighted eye wander over the variegated prospect, without raising your thoughts, with pious gratitude, to the bounteous Author of the universe, and extolling him for the wonders of the creation. Exclaim, in the fulness of your heart, 'My God! how beautiful and lovely art thou in all thy works! If thy power could, at a word, produce these enchanting scenes, what art thou in thyself! Teach me to love thee, and to be ever grateful for the blessings I enjoy!' Thus your studies will contribute to your advancement in virtue, promote the glory of God, and tend, in the present instance, to prepare you for your first communion."

"I fear," said Maria, "we shall find it difficult to think of Almighty God as often as you recommend, though I am aware we ought to do so."—"Take courage, my dear children; nothing is difficult to those who love. You desire, I am persuaded, to love God with all the powers of your soul; and as an object that engages our affection engages also our thoughts, accustom yourselves in youth, to raise your hearts frequently to God by short but fervent aspirations, and the practice will become not only easy but delightful."

"How much I am indebted to you for your kind instructions!" said Maria, affectionately embracing her governess; "I will endeavor to put them in practice, and apply to my studies with greater diligence than I have hitherto employed, since you assure me they are duties, the careful performance of which will be pleasing to God."

"And I, dear madam," rejoined Miss Mordaunt, "feel most grateful for the interest you take in my welfare. My attention to your excellent precepts is the only means I shall ever possess of showing my gratitude, and repaying your labors."

A summons to tea prevented Miss Hargrave's answer, and gave a new turn to the conversation; much to the

joy of Frances, who had not yet begun to be sincerely anxious for any improvement that demanded the sacrifice of her self-love.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

"How happy I am, my dear madam, to find you alone, and apparently disengaged," said Maria, entering the school-room during the time of recreation. "I slipped away from my companions," she continued, with an engaging smile, "in the hope of being indulged in half an hour's conversation. Will you oblige me?"

"With pleasure, my love," answered Miss Hargrave. "Your desire of instruction on the important duty you have to fulfil, affords me much consolation, and amply rewards my solicitude; but after this great work has been completed, you must promise, that you will devote to relaxation the time which is appointed for it. Remember, for I have made the remark before, that intervals of amusement are as essential as study; that the latter cannot be long maintained without the aid of the former, and that both enter into the views of our all-wise Creator. Attend, then, to the business of recreation, in the spirit of obedience, and with a view to please God, and the hours so employed will be quite as acceptable to him, as if they were occupied in prayer."

"You are not angry with me, I hope," said Maria, timidly.—"Surely not, my sweet girl," replied the governess, fondly embracing her interesting charge; "I am delighted and edified by your fervor, and wish it were generally imitated. I only desire to moderate it, lest it exceed the bounds of prudence; for when this is the case, so great are the weakness and inconstancy of our nature, we are in imminent danger of falling from our primitive warmth of devotion, into negligence and tepidity."

"I am not quite sure," replied Maria, "that I understand what is meant by tepidity; but I suppose it to be a coldness in the service of Almighty God, and a carelessness whether we please or offend him—a feeling of indifference with regard to our salvation, and, consequently, a reluctance to discharge the duties of religion; imagining that it will be soon enough, by and by, to lead stricter

lives, when the restraint, we hope, will prove less painful to self-love."

"You have conceived a just idea of that fault," said Miss Hargrave. "Tepidity is the very reverse of fervor; it is an inexcusable negligence in the service of God, and a culpable inattention to the performance of our duty. An alarming spiritual languor takes possession, by degrees, of the soul, and almost deprives her of life. This disorder is so much the more dangerous, because self-love conceals its malignity, and prevents the application of judicious remedies. A soul in this state is not, perhaps, willing to commit mortal sin, nor to abandon the service of God altogether; but she is indifferent with regard to venial sins; and the catechism, you know, informs us, that those who neglect small faults, incur the danger of falling into great ones.

"Young persons should be much on their guard against this too general fault. When unexposed to temptation, they imagine themselves strong enough always to resist it. Educated in habits of piety, and enamored with its practices, they experience no difficulty, while in retirement, in performing all the offices which religion enjoins. But, on their entrance into life, the scene is changed; their fidelity is put to the test, and, unhappily, the service of God too often yields to that of the world. The exact fulfilment of their spiritual obligations is a bar to the pleasures to which worldlings invite them. By degrees, they fall off from their original fervor, become unfaithful to divine grace, neglect to nourish their soul with the salutary food of pious reading and meditation, and, at length, sink into a lamentable state of sloth and apathy.

"I have been led, insensibly, into this conversation," continued Miss Hargrave; "but will not pursue it, as at present it is not necessary to your instruction; at some future period it may be resumed."—At this moment the door opened; and Jane, who, like the shadow of Maria, was seldom far behind, made her appearance.

"You stole away from me very slyly, Maria," she exclaimed; "I have been looking for you every where. May I be allowed, dear madam," continued she, addressing her governess, "to participate in the benefit of your remarks?"—"Certainly, my love; your company, as well

as Maria's, always affords me pleasure. What is to be the subject of our discourse?"

"You have been so kind," said Miss Alton, "as to explain the nature of humility. Will you now inform us what else is necessary for a worthy communion?"—"Besides humility," answered Miss Hargrave, "which I pointed out as the foundation of every other virtue, "faith, hope, charity, and an ardent desire to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ, in this divine mystery, are dispositions absolutely essential. Now, what is *faith*? and what particular faith is requisite in partaking of the holy eucharist?"

"Faith," replied Jane, "is, according to the catechism, "to believe, without doubting, whatever God has revealed. The particular faith which is necessary in order to receive the holy sacrament, is, to believe that the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, are truly present therein, under the forms or appearances of bread and wine."

"Right, my love," said the governess; "carefully remember, and be daily more and more penetrated with, this divine and awful truth. Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the second person of the most blessed Trinity—God, equal to his Father from all eternity—has condescended to veil himself, for our sakes, under the form of bread, in the holy eucharist. Having, for the love of us, vouchsafed to become man, he took flesh in the chaste womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, subjected himself to innumerable privations and sufferings, and, at length, died in excruciating torments on the cross. But, not content with what he had already accomplished, already suffered, this God of love would remain with us on earth, even to the end of time, and expose himself daily to fresh insults, to new outrages, in order to dwell with, and even become the food of, his ungrateful children."

"Can Jesus Christ be insulted and outraged now that he is in heaven?" asked Miss Alton.—"Your question surprises me, Maria," said Miss Hargrave. "Why do you take so much pains to procure him an agreeable abode in your heart, but because you are instructed, that an unworthy communion is the greatest indignity you can possibly offer him?"

"Ah!" said Maria, blushing, "I now recollect; it was want of reflection, and not ignorance that produced my

silly question. I am sorry to have interrupted you.”—“It is of no consequence, my love,” continued Miss Hargrave; “we can easily return to the subject. But as the conversation has branched out into another vein, allow me to prolong the digression for a moment, and explain to you, that, in the blessed sacrament, our Saviour is exposed to numberless indignities, besides those which he receives from unworthy communicants. Even among Catholics, who profess to believe the reality of the divine presence, few are penetrated with the respect which they owe to Jesus Christ in this divine mystery! Few pay to him, when concealed in our tabernacles, or exposed on our altars, that profound adoration which is so eminently his due. We believe him to be God! Surely, then, we ought to justify our faith, and openly render him the homage which the Deity has a right to claim. By a decorous exterior, and recollection of mind, we should evince our faith; and by unaffected effusions of thanksgiving and love, testify our grateful acknowledgment of his unspeakable mercy. Why do we wound the affectionate heart of Jesus, by visiting him so rarely, and then perhaps only by constraint, thinking the time tedious which we pass in his company? Why, in a word, among the multitudes who profess his doctrine, are his temples rendered solitudes, from the small number who assemble to join in his worship? If men are eager to make their court to earthly kings and princes, in the hope of obtaining some temporal benefit, how much more anxious should they be to pay their homage to the King of kings, from whom alone any permanent good can be expected! Remember, then, my children, as often as you are in the presence of the blessed sacrament, to behave with the respect and reverence which are due to so august a mystery. Never forget that, though you see not our divine Lord with the eyes of the body, he is not the less truly present. His all-piercing eye beholds your inmost soul; and he will confer or withhold his blessings, according to the dispositions in which you appear before him.”

At this moment Frances, contrary to her usual custom, entered the room without being called. “Is it three o’clock already?” asked Maria, with seeming disappointment. “I am sorry you are come so soon, Frances, as now there must be an end to our instruction for this day.”

"Serious discourse, I know," said Jane, "suits not the taste of Frances ; but perhaps she will, in this one instance, do us the favor to amuse herself with a book, while our kind governess continues her remarks. Frances, though she says nothing, will, I am sure, excuse our selfishness, on account of the occasion."

"I beg," replied Frances, "you will use no ceremony with me; I was tired of play, and, therefore, thought I would, for once, be very diligent, and come to work exactly at three o'clock ; and as I am now in a serious humor, if a quartette will be as agreeable as a trio, I shall be glad to join your company."

This important point being settled, Miss Hargrave, who was pleased to find that Frances was willing to be present at a conversation, which was still more necessary for her than for the others, willingly resumed the discourse.

"We were speaking, my dear children, of the faith which is requisite in approaching to the holy sacrament. You seem perfectly aware, that you are not to receive bread, as it appears to your material senses, but Jesus Christ himself, your Lord and your God. Do you, then, think, that you can ever do too much, in order to receive him worthily? Since he vouchsafes to give himself to you in this sacrament of love ; since he has condescended to say, that it is his delight to be with the children of men ; can you prepare yourselves with too much assiduity, or evince too earnest a solicitude, in adorning the habitation of your soul for so distinguished a guest? Certainly not. Exert, then, your utmost endeavor, to overcome your faults, and to discard every thing that is likely to displease his infinite purity. Use, for his reception, the same diligence you would employ, were a person of exalted rank to pay a visit to your earthly dwelling. Care would be taken to remove from his sight every offensive object, and the apartment would be decorated with its most splendid furniture. The choicest flowers would be culled, to refresh him with their fragrance, and the rarest fruits be collected, to regale his taste. Act thus, when about to entertain your Lord, and he will demand no more. By fruits and flowers, my dear pupils will, of course, understand the virtues and good works with which the soul should be adorned."

"I fear," said Maria with a sigh, "I shall perform this



great work very imperfectly. I dread, yet long for the time."

"Do not indulge fruitless apprehensions," returned Miss Hargrave; "even the most perfect is infinitely unworthy to feed at this heavenly table. But our amiable Lord willingly overlooks our defects, when our conscience affords us the gratifying testimony, that we have used our best exertions. And of this be assured, that, how ardent soever may be your desires to unite yourself to your Saviour, they are not, in any proportion, equal to his, to give himself to you. Let, then, divine faith elevate your minds above all human considerations. In the presence of your God, forget yourselves, and every thing, except him. This lively faith cannot but awaken a profound humility, accompanied by a sweet, consoling hope, that, through the means of this sacrament, you may attain to everlasting felicity; for Christ has declared, "that he who eats of this bread shall live for ever." What is *hope*, Maria?"

"The catechism teaches us," she answered, "that it is a gift of God, by which, relying on the divine assistance, our souls are raised to a lively expectation of eternal glory."

"Yes," resumed Miss Hargrave; "and this virtue is founded on the promises of God, by which we are assured, that, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, we shall obtain a seat in the kingdom of heaven, provided we do what Almighty God enjoins, and carefully avoid what he forbids. For this end, the grace of God is requisite, and this he willingly bestows on all who fervently apply for it. What advantages, then, what abundant graces, may we not hope for, if we approach worthily to the holy communion! What can our divine Lord refuse, after having condescended to give us himself? Go to him, my dear children, with confidence; lay all your wants at his sacred feet; deposit your souls in his hands, and abandon every thing to his tender mercy. Constantly, daily resolve, never, for any consideration, to offend God deliberately, and you will secure his favor and protection. You must confide in his love as in that of an affectionate father; assured that he will grant whatever you ask, provided it be necessary for your salvation, or conducive to his greater honor and glory. That which we are anxious to obtain, we are naturally afraid of losing. The divine virtue of

hope, therefore, produces in the soul a salutary dread, lest she should forfeit the grace of God, by mortal sin; because, such is our weakness, and so liable are we to change, that, without the most vigilant circumspection, we can never be secure that we shall remain long in the same temper of mind. This fear keeps us humble, and protects us against the danger of falling into presumption."

Miss Hargrave now paused, lest she should tire her youthful auditors. But she had not such volatile spirits to deal with; her amiable pupils were too intent upon the objects they had in view, to be fatigued by an hour's attention. They earnestly entreated her to indulge them a few moments longer, assuring her, that they should not feel the slightest weariness, were she to speak on no other subject during the whole afternoon.

"Your ardor, my dear children, in such a cause, affords me great pleasure, and, as the time is drawing so near, makes me willing to gratify you. But my poor Frances, who has not the same interest, is, I am apprehensive, but ill amused.

"This conversation, my love," said she, turning to Frances, who appeared very thoughtful, "cannot be entertaining to you. Your mamma, I perceive, is walking in the garden; you had better go and join her."

"And what do you suppose mamma would say, when I told her the reason?" replied Frances. "Why, she should reprove me sharply for my want of piety, and attention to my duty, so that the remedy would be worse than the disease. I am not tired, and I request that my staying here may not prevent you from continuing your instruction. I am conscious, that I ought to feel as much interested in it, as either Maria or Jane; and now that the time, as you say, draws near, I begin to be sorry, that I have been so negligent on the subject of my first communion. Notwithstanding all the restraints Maria imposes on herself, she seems to derive more unmixed pleasure from this long preparation (which completely frightens me), than ever I experienced, when getting ready for some birth-day ball, or partaking of a long-wished-for feast; for I was always sure to meet with some trouble or disappointment, and the reality seldom answered the expectation I had formed."

"And it will be always so, my dear Frances," interrupted Miss Hargrave, "in our search after the pleasures of this

world. They invariably leave behind them a bitterness, which shows how unsubstantial they are, and how incapable of satisfying the heart of man. We have been created, my child, for nobler objects, more exalted views; and God alone can fully satisfy the soul, which he has formed for enjoyments so incomparably superior. In our pursuit of virtue, the effect is different; for though it may lay us under the necessity of curbing our passions, controlling our senses, and overcoming our natural propensity to self-love; yet, as God is the object, we are carried on by his divine assistance, and supported by an ineffable sweetness, which verifies these words of our Saviour: 'My yoke is easy and my burthen light.' Fail not, my love, to profit by the grace of God, which now urges you to lament your former negligence. Let the example of your sister encourage you to walk in her footsteps. Thus you will speedily enjoy that peace of mind which you seem to consider so desirable."

"Do you think," said Frances, "if I were to take extraordinary pains to amend, that Mr. Morini would let me go to communion at Christmas? But I am afraid he will be displeased with my giving him the trouble to instruct me alone, and will desire me to wait till there are others to be prepared, which may not be the case for nine months."

"Should it so happen, you will have no right to complain, since your own negligence has been the cause of the delay; but, generally speaking, those whose office it is to teach others, feel too much interested in their improvement, to omit any opportunity of benefiting by their moments of diligence or fervor. I will, therefore, take upon myself to engage Mr. Morini in your behalf, and it will be entirely your own fault, if your present wishes are not fulfilled."

Frances thanked her governess, with more than usual warmth, promised to be, in future, very attentive to her advice, and begged she might no longer interrupt the former subject of conversation. Miss Mordaunt then inquired, if *charity* was not the next virtue to be explained? Miss Hargrave answered in the affirmative, and continued her discourse.

"Charity, though the last-named of the theological virtues, is of the highest importance. Without charity, faith and hope will be of no advantage. This admirable

virtue renders the excellence of the two others complete. Faith and hope are no longer necessary than while we continue on earth, because in heaven, we shall behold, face to face, that great and glorious Being, in whom we have believed ; we shall possess the divine object of our ardent desires, and shall, therefore, have no occasion either for faith or hope ; but charity, which is perfected only in heaven, will lead and accompany us even to the bosom of God."

"In the holy sacrament of the altar, the love of God manifests itself in a singular and distinguished manner. Not content to remain under the veil of the sacrament, to receive our homage and adoration, he desires to unite himself to us, and to become our food. He stands in no need of us, nor of our affection ; and yet, wonderful humiliation ! he condescends to ask it, saying, 'Son, give me thy heart.' How ungrateful, then, shall we show ourselves, if we do not give him our whole heart, and consecrate to him all the affections of our soul ! Being infinitely amiable, infinitely beautiful and holy, his sovereign perfections have an indisputable right to our love. Nevertheless, he waives that claim, and, with all the tenderness of a most affectionate father, sweetly invites us to love him. And shall we refuse him this just return of love for love ? Shall we deny the only boon he asks ? Ah, no ! let us present him the little we have in our power, but which he values more than kingdoms. Let us devote to him that heart of which he is so kindly jealous, and make it the business of our lives, to love him daily more and more."

"I wish I could be sure of feeling and acting thus," said Maria eagerly ; "but I am apprehensive that, when this great festival is past, I may relax in my anxiety to please God, and may consequently grow cool in his service."

"Fire, to be kept burning," resumed Miss Hargrave, "must be continually supplied with fuel ; otherwise it will decay, and at length expire ; its properties are, to warm and purify. Divine charity, of which fire is an emblem, must be maintained in the soul by fervent prayer, and frequent elevations of the heart to God. Human friendship, and natural affections, are much weakened, and even destroyed, by long absence, if there be no intercourse between the objects ; so, likewise, the fire of charity

becomes, by degrees, less intense, and is in danger of being totally extinguished, unless it be kept alive by a constant communication with the divine Source from whence it flows. The properties of this celestial flame are, to warm our frozen hearts, animate them with zeal in the service of God, and destroy in them every affection to the smallest deliberate sin. Love makes all things easy and delightful; it smooths the roughest path, is the shortest road to perfection, and unites us quickly and intimately to God.

“Our merciful Redeemer expresses his wish, in these endearing terms, to communicate himself to us in the adorable sacrament of the altar: ‘Come to me all ye who are heavily laden, and I will refresh you.’ Approach, then, to this heavenly banquet, with souls inflamed with gratitude and love. Let not your beneficent Lord have to upbraid you, with wounding his most tender heart, by a cold and unfeeling reception. Neither be so insensible as to turn your back upon him, at the very moment when he comes to load you with his choicest blessings, but endeavor to make him a reciprocal return. In all human attachments, however innocent the object, our love must be restrained, and kept within narrow bounds, lest a preference for the creature should destroy that love which is due to the Creator, and thereby bring death to our souls. But, when God is the object, then, and then only, we may love without control. We can never exceed, and the only danger is, lest, the capacity of our heart being so small, our love should be still too limited. Much more, my dear children, might be said on this subject; but I think it unnecessary to proceed any further, convinced that you clearly understand the importance of the solemn act which you are going to perform.”

The young ladies returned thanks to their governess, and expressed a hope to evince, by their future conduct, that her trouble had not been bestowed in vain.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

TIME, with steady but rapid wing, had conducted Maria Alton, and her interesting friend, to the term after which they so ardently sighed. The next day, and they would

be put in possession of all they desired. This thought had, for a long period, consoled them in all their difficulties, and enabled them to surmount every obstacle to this divine union. Maria gradually overcame her natural slothfulness, and her attention to study was so unremitting, that she received not, during the last two months, a single reproof from her governess. Not a murmur, not a complaint, escaped her lips. If Frances or Teresa proved troublesome, and such was not unfrequently the case, she endeavored to remedy the evil quietly, and without offending them. When this was not in her power, she knew that, by bearing it patiently, she could turn it to her own advantage. Though Frances was no longer the turbulent and petulant girl she used to be, yet, not entering into the devout feelings of Maria, she frequently solicited her company in the garden or play-room, when the latter would have been better satisfied to pass her leisure moments in her own chamber, engaged in prayer or pious reading, or in conversing with Miss Hargrave on her favorite topic.

It was not necessary, as it usually is on similar occasions, to exhort either Maria or Jane to lay aside, for a time, any pursuit which might dissipate their thoughts; to refrain from unnecessary visits, and parties of pleasure; or to attend with diligence to instruction and prayer. Their fervor, on the contrary, rather required to be moderated, lest too close an application should injure their health. How pleasing, how edifying, is this conduct in young persons, who are preparing for their first communion! but, unfortunately, how rarely is it witnessed!

Before their approach to the holy sacrament for the first time, young persons are obliged to make a general confession, in order to supply the defects which may have accompanied their ordinary confessions up to that period, either from their natural thoughtlessness, or, which is still worse, and perhaps but too common, from want of sincerity. Miss Hargrave, though well aware, that this point had not been neglected by Mr. Morini, considered it her duty, at all fit opportunities, to enforce his instructions. She, therefore, eagerly availed herself of the present occasion, to introduce to her dear pupils this important subject, more with a view of indirectly instructing Frances, than from any idea that Maria and Jane were not sufficiently sensible of what they had to perform.

She was too deeply interested in their general improvement, especially inasmuch as it regarded the heart, not to feel great anxiety on account of Frances, whose advancement in virtue and piety was so little in unison with her wishes. She had frequently mentioned her uneasiness on this head to Lady Alton and Mr. Morini, and they had comforted her with the assurance, that as Frances was intrinsically good, her excellent lessons would not always remain without fruit. This, indeed, she found, after a time, to be the case, and the progress of Frances, though slow, was solid and lasting. Possessed of a large share of understanding, she was not ignorant of her defects, but she wanted courage to subdue them. Too fond of her dear self, she frequently acted in opposition to her judgment, in order to gratify, for a moment, her predominant feeling; but she must have been fundamentally vicious, could she have continued to be proof against the unwearied patience of a governess whose eye, unobserved, continually pursued her, and whose firm and steady, yet gentle, hand, was ever on the watch to draw the rein, and curb the first risings of her easily awakened passions. In the person of Miss Hargrave, Frances had found a governess determined to be obeyed, but one whose commands, she was obliged to admit, were ever just and reasonable. She, therefore, soon learned to respect her authority.

As the sleepy current glides silently along, and never intermits its course, though its movement is hardly perceptible, so, by these means steadily pursued, the bad habits of Frances disappeared, by degrees, without her seeming to make any great effort to overcome them. No longer permitted, as heretofore, to indulge her ill-humor with impunity, or give way to an imperious temper, her passions were brought under subjection, and reason was enabled to assert its empire, and display the native virtues of her heart. She felt, and candidly acknowledged herself, happier than she used to be. She discovered, that happiness was the companion and friend of virtue, as she knew, by fatal experience, that it fled in terror from the breast assailed by stormy passions. Frances, allowed to indulge her caprice and ill-humor, was fretful, impatient, and a burthen to herself; kept under a salutary restraint, she became good-humored and contented—pleased with herself, and pleasing to those around her. Two years effected

in her character so complete a revolution, that she was scarcely recognized as the same individual.

When the young ladies were assembled for their afternoon employment, Miss Hargrave introduced the topic proposed for their instruction. "Do you remember, my dear children," said she, addressing Maria and Jane, "that in a former conversation, I alluded to the necessity of a general confession on the eve of your first communion? Have you thought seriously on this subject?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Maria; "Mr. Morini mentioned it also, and he advised us to repeat every day, for at least a week before, certain prayers, to beg of Almighty God the grace that we may perform this duty well."

"You have, I hope," said the governess, "punctually followed his advice. Our divine Lord, by instituting the sacrament of penance, has laid us under an additional obligation to his mercy. In the sacrament of baptism, we are cleansed from original sin; but as baptism can be administered only once, what would become of the greater number of us, had not Almighty God established this admirable means of reconciliation, and promised us pardon on so easy terms?"

"Easy terms!" exclaimed Frances; "I am sure I do not think so; and if I were at liberty to act as I pleased, I would never go to confession at all."

"I differ from you, Frances," replied Miss Mordaunt; "I certainly felt great repugnance, in the first instance, as I dare say all converts do; but I found the task easier than I expected, and it has been to me a source of no small consolation."

"The sentiments of Frances are, however," said Miss Hargrave, "those of most young people, who are not sincerely desirous of amending their conduct. But, my love," she continued, addressing her giddy pupil, "you will, by and by, become more sensible of the advantage to be derived from this sacrament, and your opinion will change. Still I must acknowledge that there is in the practice something revolting to our nature, when only considered in a human point of view; but, when we contemplate, with the eye of faith, the benefits it produces, we are disposed to think differently, and, without presuming to complain of its bitterness, ought to feel grateful that Almighty God has provided so efficacious a remedy."



It is, indeed, a medicine which those who have been so unhappy as to violate the law of God, usually apply for with earnestness, since it is sure to bring peace and consolation to the soul."

"That is to say," exclaimed Frances quickly, "if our confessions are made with proper dispositions."—"Agreed, my love," replied Miss Hargrave; "without the dispositions requisite, no sacrament can benefit us. On the contrary, our approach to it will be only an abuse, and serve but to plunge us more deeply into guilt."

"Is it not because children often make bad confessions," said Maria, "that we are obliged to make a general one before our first communion?"—"It is usual to do so," answered Miss Hargrave, "in order to repair the negligences that may have accompanied former confessions; and even had our confessions been always well made up to that period, it would still be salutary and advisable, as, by taking a serious review of our past years, and placing our numberless faults of commission and omission immediately under our eye, we should be more likely to excite in our souls that contrition which is necessary, in order to obtain the benefit of the sacrament."

"For my part," said Frances, "I find it mortification enough to confess my faults once. I know not how I shall bring myself to repeat them. It surprises me, that Maria can repair to confession so readily every fortnight; for I scarcely recollect any thing to say, and never go except at the *indulgences*, which generally arrive too often for my inclination. I have read in a prayer-book, that we are not obliged to confess any other than mortal sins, and, therefore, I do not trouble myself about the smaller ones."

"Oh! we ought to confess all we can remember!" said Maria (shocked at the latitude of her sister's opinion); "because we cannot always decide whether they are mortal or venial; and if we were sure they were only venial, we should still be afraid to pass them over, because the catechism says, 'He who neglects small faults, will fall into great ones.'"

"Maria is right," interrupted Miss Hargrave; "and her desire to amend is the reason why she feels no difficulty in going to confession so often. Your candor pleases me, Frances, though I disapprove of your sentiments. Self-love too often blinds us to our defects, and glosses over

the malignity of our faults: we shall always be partial judges in our own cause. How, then, shall we presume to think ourselves capable of deciding with certainty what sins are mortal, and what are not, since it is upon circumstances that their malignity often depends? As long as you remain, my dear child, without a real desire to improve, so long will confession be burthensome and painful to you. Form an earnest wish to be cured of your spiritual disorders, and the remedy will be no longer nauseous. What are the conditions requisite for a good confession? Can you inform me, Frances?"

"I think any one who has learned the catechism throughout as often as I have," she replied, "must be stupid, indeed, not to be able to answer that question."

"But," said Miss Hargrave, "if they make no better use of their knowledge than you appear to have made of yours, it will profit them little. Theory here must be reduced to practice."

"Well, but now, my dear good governess, do not look so grave," said Frances; "I shall really endeavor to do better; so resume your smiles. I know you will point out my faults, whether I like it or not; but do not be angry."

"I am not angry, my love," replied Miss Hargrave, "but only grieved to see you so indifferent in matters of so much importance to your eternal welfare. However, you promise amendment, and I take you at your word. The conditions requisite for a good confession are—first, that you make a sincere and impartial examination of your conscience, earnestly begging of Almighty God the grace to discover your sins. Remember, my dear child, that though you may succeed in deceiving your director, and, through self-love, even yourself, you can never elude the all-piercing eye of God. His knowledge extends to the inmost recesses of the soul, and to its most secret thoughts. We should, therefore, tremble at the bare idea of making a bad confession, since it must inevitably involve us more deeply in guilt."

"Sincerity, then," interrupted Miss Mordaunt, "must be the groundwork of a good confession."—"Most certainly," resumed the governess; "without it, the other conditions would be useless."

"I will endeavor not to have any thing to answer for on that head," said Maria, "but confess all the sins I can

remember, whether it be necessary or not. I am well aware that it is impossible to deceive God, and there is no advantage in trying to deceive our director; because Almighty God will, sooner or later, punish such deception, and perhaps allow us to die in our sins."

"Oh! *you* always think and do what is right!" said Frances to her sister; "and, therefore, have nothing to fear from going to confession; but I, who frequently get into scrapes, you know, should be very glad to say nothing on the subject. Besides, I often consider what an ill opinion a priest must form of one. I believe I should like to go to a new director every time!"

"Whatever difficulty we may have in exposing our faults, it must be much more advantageous, I should judge," said Miss Mordaunt, "to continue with the same priest, than to be frequently changing."

"You are perfectly right, my love," rejoined Miss Hargrave. "To be ever changing our confessor is likely to be as prejudicial to the soul, as trying first one physician and then another, would prove to the body; yet there are circumstances in which a change may be made with advantage. A physician may be very clever, and yet not have it in his power to prescribe remedies suitable to every constitution; so, likewise, a spiritual director may be pious, learned and zealous for the salvation of souls, and yet not be equally calculated to conduct every individual. A confessor who skilfully makes himself master of our diseases, and charitably employs his utmost endeavors to cure them, should be looked upon as a treasure sent from heaven, be treated with the greatest deference and respect, and his advice and counsel (in matters purely spiritual) should be taken as coming from the mouth of God."

"Well, really," said Frances, laughing, "as you approve of a change in some cases, I had better make the experiment. Mr. Morini has had me under his hands these three years, and I believe I am not at all improved by his treatment. I fear he does not exactly comprehend my case, and is a little too rigid."

"As I am sure this is said merely in jest," replied Miss Hargrave, "it needs no rebuke; but if your physician, my love, has not succeeded, I apprehend it is because you have not exactly complied with his directions. When he prescribed corrosives or bitter draughts, you thought leni

tives or sweet cordials would be more suitable. You consequently rejected the former, and encouraged your disease by the application of the latter. Therefore you have not given him a fair chance. Begin, before your disorder takes too deep a root, to pay the strictest attention to what he suggests; and, as I am well acquainted with his skill, I will answer for your cure, without the aid of any other director."

"You always contrive very cunningly," said Frances, "to turn every thing we say into a lesson of instruction! I shall be obliged, if this is the case, to reflect more before I speak, lest I should be often caught in my own toils!"

"And you will act wisely, my love. If we never spoke without reflection, we should not utter the many useless things we do. But of this hereafter. We will, if you please, resume our discourse on the nature of penance."

"I shall be glad when you have done with this subject," said Frances, gaily; "because it is to me a very unpleasant one. I neither like to talk nor to think about it."

"Contrition is, I believe, the next point, is it not?" said Maria.—"Yes," answered Frances; "and it will not, I hope, engage us long; because we all know that it means sorrow for our sins."

"You very possibly know what it means, Frances," said Miss Hargrave, taking up the conversation; "but have you seriously considered its importance and extent? It is not enough to say you are sorry, nor even to feel for the moment that you really are so; but you must show, by a thorough change of life, that your professions of sorrow are sincere. Neither will it suffice to be sorry for some mortal sins; our regret must extend to all, since one alone, unrepented of, will be sufficient to precipitate us into hell. How carefully, then, ought we to avoid sin, as its consequences are so dreadful! We may succeed, my dear children, in deceiving our director for a time by external professions of sorrow, and he may pronounce over us the words of absolution; but we cannot impose on him whose all-seeing eye reaches our inmost souls; and the sentence of absolution, pronounced under such circumstances, instead of freeing us from our sins, will but add to our other crimes the dreadful guilt of sacrilege. Almighty God is infinitely merciful; but, at the same time, he is infinitely just. The truly penitent he willingly

receives into favor, and reinstates in his grace ; but continually relapsing sinners are his aversion. Nor must we wonder at this. Their purposes of amendment are never really sincere ; they are not careful to avoid the occasions of sin ; their sorrow is not lasting, and their reiterated promises are continually broken."

"But how are we to obtain this contrition?" asked Maria ; "and how shall we be certain, that we have all that is requisite to secure the pardon of our sins in the sacrament of penance ? What you have said makes me tremble. I would not, for the world, offend God by mortal sin ; yet I fear, notwithstanding my good intentions, I shall very often displease him by venial ones."

"There are none, my child, so perfect," resumed Miss Hargrave, "as not to transgress on trivial occasions. We are men, not angels ; weakness is the condition of our nature, and our proneness to evil is the consequence of Adam's fall. Our divine Lord has said, 'Blessed is the man who could have done evil, and has not done it.' Being endowed with free will, we have it in our power to avoid the commission of deliberate offences, though only venial, if we devoutly and perseveringly pray for the grace of God, which is always at hand to assist us. Do this, then, my love, and have confidence in the aid of the Most High. Beware, however, in confessing venial sins, that you accuse yourself of those only for which you are really sorry, and which, at the same time, you firmly resolve never to commit again."

"Is it not advisable to confess venial sins?" asked Maria.—"Most assuredly," replied Miss Hargrave. "It is highly commendable, under the circumstances I have mentioned."

"The catechism explains," interrupted Frances, "that venial sin does not destroy the grace of God. I do not understand, therefore, that one need be so particular with regard to it. Besides, I have heard people declare that, for their part, if they avoided mortal sins, it was as much as they could pretend to ; that, living in the world, it was impossible not to fall frequently into venial ones, and for those they would only have to suffer a little longer in purgatory, whilst they would be sure of going to heaven after a time."

“ You have been most unfortunate, my dear Frances,” said the governess, “ in the course of your short life, to have met with persons not sufficiently guarded in their manner of expressing themselves before children, not considering how much more eagerly they imbibe those lessons which are likely to flatter the passions, than such as enforce the morality of the gospel. You produce the catechism as your voucher, that venial sin does not destroy the grace of God. You are right ; but observe, also, what immediately follows—‘ It weakens and cools the fervor of charity, lessens devotion, hinders the inspirations of the Holy Ghost from working, leaves the soul feeble and drowsy, and disposes to mortal sin ; for he that neglects small faults will easily fall into great ones. Behold, then, my dear child, the melancholy effects of indulging, without restraint, in venial sin ; and, believe me, he who serves God merely to avoid hell, is scarcely entitled to the lowest place in heaven. And it is greatly to be apprehended, that many who affect to disregard the pains of purgatory, because they are only temporary, may unexpectedly find themselves condemned to those which are eternal.

“ You seem to imagine, Frances, that, because venial sin does not destroy the grace of God, you need not be particularly careful to avoid committing it. This is an ungenerous sentiment, and unworthy of a Christian redeemed at the dear price of the death of Jesus Christ. Is it because God, in his mercy, will not condemn us for small faults, though numerous, that we consider ourselves at liberty to offend him without remorse, and requite his tender love by multiplied acts of ingratitude ? Is not this equivalent to saying, ‘ My God ! I will make an effort to live in such a manner as not to die in the guilt of mortal sin, because I dread the rigor of thy chastisements ; but I shall not take any trouble to avoid smaller transgressions, because thy mercy is so great, that thou wilt not for them condemn me to eternal sufferings. Thy greater honor and glory are of no value in my estimation, and the lowest place in thy kingdom is all I aspire to.’ What do you think of this ? should you be bold enough to make use of such language ? I will answer for it, that you would not ; and yet you are essentially guilty of the deed, though you would not dare to utter the words, as often as you indulge yourself in the wilful commission of venial sins, on the

plea, that you will not for them be condemned to the torments of hell. Resolve, my dear children, all of you, to serve Almighty God, in future, not from the fear of punishment, but from motives of affection and love; and you will no longer be indifferent about venial sins, or consider them of small importance.

"We will now say a few words on the third and last part of penance, which is satisfaction, and then dismiss the subject. Can you tell me, Teresa, what satisfaction is?" The child repeated the answer as found in the catechism: "It is a faithful performance of the prayers and good works enjoined us by the priest to whom we confess." The governess resumed—"After the guilt of sin is remitted, there still remains a punishment due to it, in order to satisfy the offended justice of God. This satisfaction must be made, either in this life, by works of penance, or in the next, by the sufferings of purgatory. Three different methods are laid down, by which the atonement in question may be effected—prayer, fasting, alms-deeds."

"Is it necessary to perform all three," asked Maria, "in order to fulfil the works of penance?"—"I hope not," said the playful, giddy Frances; "and in that case, I should choose the last-named, because I expect, by and by, to be well provided with money, and I will then give abundantly to the poor. I shall find this much easier than repeating long prayers; and as for fasting, that, you know, will never suit a lady of fashion!"

"No rank, no condition, sex or age, can exempt the sinner from doing penance, Frances," continued Miss Hargrave, "if he expects to be saved. And the mere giving of money will never obtain for us the remission of the punishment due to our sins, unless it be bestowed with the dispositions that ought to accompany it; namely, contrition of heart, and a firm purpose never to offend again. But even this will not exempt you from performing the penance enjoined by the priest. Inconsiderable as this penance is, in proportion to the greatness of our offences, there is, I fear, my dear children, but too much reason to apprehend, that the duty is often very superficially discharged, and that the conditions are by no means fully complied with."

"What are the conditions, dear madam!" asked Maria. —"That the prayers, or other good works," said Miss

Hargrave, "be performed with scrupulous exactness, with devotion, humility, and a desire to satisfy, to the utmost of our power, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the infinite justice of the Almighty. The penance which we accept is a part of the sacrament, and we are bound to attend to it, as far as possible, at the time and in the manner prescribed."

"But if the priest," interrupted Frances, "enjoin me to recite the 'Our Father,' or 'Hail, Mary,' a certain number of times every day, during a specified period, and I omit them one day, and repeat them twice as often the next, or choose, for example, to say them all at once, what harm would there be in that arrangement, as long as I recite the actual number?"

"It has happened to me on two or three occasions," said Maria, "to forget my penance on the day fixed; but then I attended to it on the day following, considering that it would be better to fulfil this duty after the time appointed, than to neglect it altogether."

"You were right, my love," answered Miss Hargrave, "and if the omission was purely the result of forgetfulness, and not at all wilful on your part, our beneficent Lord would easily pardon it, because he knows, and makes allowance for, the weakness of our nature. In reply to your objection, my dear Frances, I must observe, that penance, performed in the manner you describe, would by no means suffice for the end in view, or be pleasing to God. It is obedience that frequently gives value to our actions, and renders them acceptable in his sight. Endeavor, therefore, for the future, to be very exact in discharging this duty, according to the manner, and at the time, prescribed."

"But if the priest," said Frances, "enjoined us any thing that we were not able to perform without great inconvenience, might we not substitute something else?"

"By no means," replied Miss Hargrave. "After we have accepted the penance which the priest imposes, we have no longer any discretion on the subject; but we are always at liberty to object to it at the time, when, if he observes sufficient cause, he will change it for some other. Be, therefore, very careful not to accept the penance which you are conscious you have not the power to perform."



“If we think,” said Maria, “that our director has not prescribed penance enough, may we not add something to it?”—“Certainly; but remember, at the same time, that only that which the priest enjoins at confession, has the virtue of sacramental penance. It is undoubtedly very beneficial to use our utmost endeavors to satisfy, in this life, the justice of God, by voluntary acts of mortification; and when the Almighty sees us thus disposed, it will be his delight to extend his mercy to us. Bear in mind, however, that it is only through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and in union with them, that our prayers and other good works will be accepted, and become profitable to our salvation. Accustom yourselves, then, my dear children, to make some addition to the penance imposed, because we should always be ready to acknowledge, that it is far less than our sins deserve.”

“If no exact time be fixed for the performance of our penance,” said Jane, “I conclude that we may attend to it when most convenient to ourselves, provided the duty be fulfilled before our next confession?”

“Not so, my love. As satisfaction is the third part of penance, the sacrament remains incomplete till we have performed the exercises which are enjoined us; and, consequently, we must be particular in complying with this obligation as soon as possible.”

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE morning so earnestly desired by Maria and Jane at length began to dawn. So eager were they to prepare themselves, by prayer and meditation, for the moment in which they were to receive their divine and long-expected guest, that obedience alone kept them in bed, till within an hour of their usual time of rising. The humble Maria, who would leave nothing undone that was likely to render her more pleasing to God, sought her parents to implore their blessing. They, however, had quitted their apartments, and were looking for her in the school-room. She returned at the instant, when Sir James, leading her to her mother, said, “We have been inquiring for you, my dear child, to give you the kiss of peace.” Maria threw herself

at the feet of her respected parents, asked pardon for all the uneasiness and trouble she had ever caused them, and begged their blessing. "May the choicest graces and blessings of the Almighty ever rest upon you, my child," said Sir James, as he raised and affectionately embraced his darling Maria. "May the remembrance of this day never be effaced from your mind; and may you always approach the holy communion with the same fervor and innocence as on the present occasion." Lady Alton, affected even to tears, silently ejaculated the same petition, as she pressed to her maternal heart the dear object of her love.

Frances, who, conscious of her heedlessness, sought not, as usual, the daily embrace of her parents, had retired to a window in the hope of continuing unnoticed; but when Sir James had saluted his little Teresa and Miss Mordaunt, he called her to him, and mildly said, "Why is my Frances the only self-excluded guest from the table of the Lord on this happy day? Indeed, my child, it is to your parents a subject of extreme regret." This gentle, but well-merited rebuke, had the desired effect: it pierced her heart, and she withdrew alone to the tribune, overwhelmed with confusion, and ashamed of being seen. During the remainder of the day, no one could prevail on her to join the company of the young communicants. The children of the village, who had been very carefully instructed by their good pastor, for this great event, corresponded by their zeal and the reformation of their manners, to his pious labors. Sir James and his lady also concurred with him in whatever could give solemnity and importance to this religious act, in order that it might make an indelible impression on their minds; and thus, if they ever fell from their original fervor, recall to memory the happiness they enjoyed when, for the first time at the table of the Lord, they were a spectacle of delight to angels and to men.

The altar was adorned as on the greatest festivals, and the choicest flowers of the garden perfumed it with their fragrance. The children of the two schools in their new uniform, and several other young persons of the neighborhood, to the number of nearly thirty, walked, two and two, up the chapel, in slow procession, to the seats appointed for them, each carrying a lighted taper. Maria and Jane, simply attired in white, the emblem of innocence, mingled

in the group. A short but impressive exhortation was delivered to the young communicants, to remind them of the importance of the duty they were about to perform, and the happiness they would experience, if they brought to this divine banquet the dispositions required.

The children were instructed, with the view of preventing confusion, to leave their seats as soon as the *pater noster* was recited, arrange themselves, in couples, down the aisle, kneel there till the absolution was given, and then proceed, two at a time, to the communion rail. Every thing was conducted with the greatest order and regularity. The ardent piety and edifying comportment of the children, many of whom were bathed in tears, affected all present, even the most indifferent, and inspired them with a wish to participate in their happiness. Those young persons who had hitherto been deaf to the repeated exhortations of their pastor, now deplored their former negligence, and were animated with the hope that, by repentance and change of life, they also, in another year, might become worthy to share in that interior joy, which is usually the portion of the worthy communicant, and which was so manifestly displayed in the countenances of those before them. Even Frances—the giddy, thoughtless Frances—was sensibly moved: and the instant she saw her mother disengaged, she threw herself into her arms, and expressed her deep regret, that she had hitherto been so culpably indifferent to the duties of religion.

After a competent time had been devoted to thanksgiving, which the greater number, however, considered too short, the youthful party were summoned to breakfast. No distinction was made between rich and poor, all partook of an abundant repast with Sir James and Lady Alton, who contemplated their youthful guests with infinite delight. It had been arranged, that the young communicants should spend the whole day at the Hall, in order that, while they were supplied with every thing calculated to refresh the body, due attention might also be paid to the discharge of their spiritual duties.

The day was accordingly passed in a holy and becoming manner. After breakfast, there was an interval of half an hour before the celebration of high mass, at which all were required to be present. This time they were allowed to dispose of as they pleased; but, one by one, they stole

into the chapel, finding no recreation more agreeable, than that of entertaining themselves with their divine Saviour, who had filled their souls with delight, and made them truly taste how sweet is the Lord to those who seek him with their whole heart.

At one o'clock they dined, still accompanied by Maria and Jane, who requested that they might not be separated from their humble but edifying companions. In the afternoon, they attended vespers. At eight o'clock, having said the night prayers, and received the benediction of the blessed sacrament, all withdrew to their homes, well pleased with the recollection of the happy day they had passed.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

"I AM glad to see you, my dear mamma," said Maria, on the entrance of Lady Alton; "you have had so many engagements of late, that we do not receive that gratification near so often as we wish; I hope you are coming to remain with us."

"I have an hour's leisure, my love," answered her ladyship, "and avail myself of it to enjoy your company. Our visitors, accompanied by your papa, are gone out on a water excursion, and I excused myself, in order that I might have the pleasure of conversing with my dear girls. But I have a little reprimand to make to one among you, and, therefore, shall not, perhaps, be so welcome a visitor."

"We cannot but rejoice to see your ladyship," observed Miss Hargrave, "even when you are obliged to reprove; I trust, however, it is nothing very serious."

"I was in hopes," interrupted Frances, "that you were come to tell us some news about the company that arrived yesterday. Who are they, mamma? I think I have seen the ladies before, but I do not remember the gentlemen: I have been asking my governess, but she will not satisfy my curiosity. I wish I was old enough to be introduced; I should, in that case, see all who come, go out with them, and do as I pleased. Adieu, then, to books and work. But it will be three years first," she continued, with a sigh; "what a time to wait for that which one anxiously desires!"

"And when that time arrives, believe me," said the governess, "you will often regret the happy season that is past; enjoy, then, the present moment, and do not sigh for the future."—"The present moment," said Frances, shrugging up her shoulders, "is to be one of reproof, and, therefore, it cannot, I think, afford much enjoyment, particularly to me, who shall, I suspect, be the object of it. But you do not look as if you meant to be *very* angry, mamma, because I perceive that you smile!"

"My volatile Frances often makes me smile," answered her ladyship, "when I have reason to be serious. Your faithful monitor, conscience, my love, assures you that you deserve a reprimand. It shall not, however, be severe, because it is my object, rather to convince you of your faults, than to scold you out of them; as I believe it scarcely possible for young persons, well educated, to remain long in wilful error, and live in enmity with themselves and their God."

"Indeed, mamma, I do not wish to offend God! but"——

"You like to indulge yourself, and your insatiable curiosity," resumed her mother, "instead of putting a salutary restraint on your senses. Self-love, my Frances, must be subdued; it is our capital enemy, and if we do not keep it under with a tight rein, it will always be our master."

"What a plague this nasty self-love is!" exclaimed Frances; "I hear more about it than any thing else."—"Because it is the source of most of your faults," said Miss Hargrave; "but I am at a loss to know to what, in the present instance, her ladyship alludes."

"I think I can guess!" rejoined Frances. "I heard a great bustle this morning, on some persons coming into the chapel, when mass was half over, and could not resist an inclination to turn round, in order to ascertain who they were; that is all."—"Well, and if it were only one momentary glance," resumed the governess, "excited by surprise, and you immediately endeavored to recall your scattered thoughts, I should not pronounce your fault very serious."

"What say you, Frances," asked her mother, "was this the case?"—"I see, mamma," she replied, "that it is of no use to excuse myself; one look at the strangers did not content me. I wanted to learn whether I knew them,

whether they were young, what they were dressed in, and so on. I could not attend to my prayers after they came in. My conscience assured me, that I did wrong, and I promised, that I would be more on my guard to-morrow. Mamma, I should like to have a place, where you and papa could not observe my behavior. When I am tempted to look about, I sometimes give a sly peep, to satisfy myself that you are not watching me; I forgot to do so this morning. But allow me to remark (though I do not mean to offend), that if you had been very assiduously engaged in your devotions, with your pretty blue eyes fixed on your book, you would not have noticed me."

"True, my love, and you must take care, lest many of my distractions be laid to your charge. I should be wanting in my duty to God, did I neglect to observe your conduct in the chapel. It is the imperative duty of all who have the superintendence of youth, to teach them respectful behavior in the house of God; and I am fully persuaded, that those devout persons who have children at their side, whom they never look to, because solely intent on their own prayers, would perform an action of greater merit in the sight of Heaven, were they to watch their little charge, and prevent them from annoying and giving scandal to their neighbors."

"I fear your ladyship conceives that I have been negligent in this respect," interrupted Miss Hargrave.—"Far from it, my dear madam, and I should, with perfect confidence, trust my giddy Frances to your attentive care, were there any necessity for complying with her wish to be placed where neither her papa nor I could observe her."

"Why, mamma, that would be quite as bad; for I am sure my governess is as particular as you are. What I want is, to see without being seen."—"Find a situation, my child, in which the eye of God cannot behold you, and I will immediately allow you to do as you please."

"Oh, mamma, that is impossible!" exclaimed Frances.—"Then remember, that it is an insult to the divine majesty," continued Lady Alton, "to be present at mass, with a mind wilfully distracted; and it is impossible, that the heart can be long fixed on God, if the eye be suffered to wander continually from one object to another."

"But I grow tired," interrupted Frances. "When the priest begins, I propose to be very attentive; but then a

stranger comes in, or I see something new which I want to examine more closely. I often attempt to draw the notice of Maria, but she is as stiff as a post. Then I get weary of kneeling; am too hot, or too cold; there is always something to incommode me, and I observe others who do not behave better."

"And your example will but serve to strengthen them in their bad habits. These excuses, Frances, do not diminish your fault; and unless you seriously endeavor to amend, you will, I fear, expose yourself to the danger of breaking that precept of the church, which obliges all to hear mass on Sundays and other appointed days, under pain of mortal sin."

"But, mamma, I am never absent from mass on Sundays and holidays!"—"No, my love," resumed her mother; "but if, after being repeatedly admonished, you continue as inattentive as heretofore, it would, perhaps, be better that you were."—"How can that be?"

"Because," continued her ladyship, "the precept of the church enjoins us to hear mass. Now, Frances, how far are we from entering into the spirit of this command, when we are only present in person? We must bring to this solemn act the dispositions requisite: otherwise, to the guilt of not hearing mass, (though we attend the celebration of it), we add the sins of scandalizing our neighbor, and insulting the majesty of God, in the very temple where he has fixed himself to receive our homage. No levity of behavior, or voluntary inattention, can be without sin, even when the mass is not of obligation; and when it is, wilful distractions, at the elevation or communion, are certainly mortal sins. Consider, how great an injury we do ourselves, when we trifle away our time during the short period allotted to this act of religion."

"It often appears very long to me, mamma," said Frances, coloring; "I cannot keep my mind fixed on serious things. You are aware, that I am not naturally sedate, like Maria: it is not, therefore, my fault."

"Do not hope to justify yourself by this subterfuge, Frances, of which self-love is the author. I know full well, that every species of restraint is irksome to you; but remember this injunction of our Saviour to his apostles: 'Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation.' Unless we keep a vigilant guard over our senses, and subject our wan-

dering imaginations to the salutary control which religion demands, we shall continually fall a prey to the snares of the enemy, who is always on the watch to take advantage of our slothfulness."

"But, mamma, all persons are not equally devout, and perhaps Almighty God does not require the same degree of excellence in all."—"Possibly not. But he requires of us in proportion to the grace he bestows, and, as we cannot form a correct judgment of the precise measure of this grace, it should be our constant study to improve our talent to the utmost."

"But how may we become endued with this spirit of devotion?" asked Frances, in a serious tone.—"We must pray for it, my dear child," replied her mother. "Go to the throne of mercy with the same confidence, use the same importunity as when you apply to a friend, from whom you are anxious to obtain a favor. Beseech our divine Lord to shower down upon you the graces which are necessary for your salvation. Expose to him your wants, describe the difficulty you experience in fixing your roving thoughts, and in behaving with due respect in his sacred temple. Implore his assistance with an humble reliance on his bounty, and, be assured, you will not ask in vain."

"I fear," interrupted Frances, "Almighty God does not listen to my prayers; I have frequently made petitions to him, but he has not granted them."

"Nevertheless, he, whose word can never fail, has said, 'Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' When, therefore, we do not obtain that which we solicit, we may conclude, either that it would not contribute to our eternal welfare, or that we do not ask in a proper manner. Cold, heartless, inattentive prayers, my dear child, will not bring down the blessings of Heaven; but, on the contrary, they will expose us to its severest chastisements. Merely to repeat a form of words (if the mind be not engaged, nor the heart interested, in what the lips utter) is not to pray. Maria, can you explain what are the requisite conditions of prayer?"

"I think I have been instructed," she replied, "that we must pray with earnestness, humility, confidence and perseverance."

"Yes. We must pray earnestly; for if we offer our petitions to the throne of mercy, with indifference, we have



no right to expect that they will be granted. Our prayer must be humble, since we have no claim or title to any favor we may solicit; and we must ask with confidence, hoping to receive every thing from the bounty of God. We are certain that he hears our prayers, because our inmost thoughts are known to him; and if we courageously persevere, our wishes will ultimately be crowned with success, inasmuch as a compliance with them will tend to our salvation. Remember, however, that our prayers have no other merit in the sight of God, than that which they derive from Jesus Christ; through him alone they can become acceptable. The prayers, therefore, which we offer through the mediation of Jesus, in the divine sacrifice of the mass, are more pleasing to God, than any others; and consequently, we should avail ourselves of that favorable time, to make our petitions. What says the catechism on the subject of the mass?"

"The words of the catechism," replied Maria, "are these: 'It is the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, under the forms and appearances of bread and wine, in memory of his death and passion for the remission of our sins.'"

"What are the ends for which we are to offer the divine sacrifice, and how must we hear it?"

"We must hear it," resumed Maria, "with very great attention and devotion; and offer it, first, for God's honor and glory; secondly, in thanksgiving for all his benefits; thirdly, in satisfaction for all our sins; and fourthly, to obtain those graces and blessings of which we have the greatest need."

"Mark now, Frances, what the catechism says on this important subject, and consider how little impression it has made on you. Of the necessity of hearing mass with attention, I have already spoken; I will now briefly touch on the other points. You are not ignorant, though perhaps you have never reflected, that, from the beginning of the world, sacrifices were offered to the Almighty. They consisted chiefly in the bloody oblation of beasts, and were, for the most part, intended as an expiation for sin; but the blood of these victims could by no means satisfy the offended justice of God, except through faith in a mediator to come. That mediator was Jesus Christ, of whose great sacrifice on the cross these oblations were but the types

or figures. This mode of sacrifice, you know, continued in the Jewish dispensation to be agreeable to God, till the immolation of the true victim, whose coming had been promised to our first parents, and the period of whose birth was foretold by the prophets, several hundred years before his appearance. Therefore, when Jesus Christ, the Priest of the Most High, offered himself to his eternal Father, to appease his wrath and make atonement, by the shedding of his blood, for the sins of men, his sacrifice was in itself so efficacious, as to supersede the necessity of any other. Still our divine Saviour, not content with having offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross, continues, through the love he bears us, to offer himself daily, by the ministry of his priests, in an unbloody manner, in memory of his death and passion, and for the remission of our sins. This is the 'clean oblation,' the 'Lamb without spot,' the holy sacrifice, which, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, is unceasingly offered to the Most High."

"Mamma!" interrupted Maria, "you say 'from the rising to the setting of the sun'—I thought it was not usual to celebrate mass in the afternoon?"

"Neither is it, my love. But if you consider, that time varies in different parts of the globe, that every fifteen degrees make a difference of an hour, you will easily comprehend, that there is no period of the day or night, in which our divine Mediator is not offering himself to his eternal Father, for some portion or other of his thankless children. How ungrateful, then, and how criminal are we, in being present at these sacred mysteries, without a respectful demeanor, collectedness of thought, or any feelings of devotion! If the angels look on in silent expectation; if they prostrate themselves before the altar, confounded at the humiliations of the Lord of glory—struck with wonder, that the Creator should thus become obedient to the voice of his creature—how shall man, insect as he is, in comparison with his God, dare to appear in a temple dedicated exclusively to the divine service, with a levity of carriage and dissipation of mind, that would scandalize even heathens?"

"Mamma, you frighten me," interrupted Frances. "I will remember what you have said, and endeavor to behave

better in future. I am sorry to have caused you so much uneasiness."

"I accept your apology, my love, and hope you will keep your resolution; but let your motive be to honor and serve God, rather than to escape my displeasure. In the latter case, you will be attentive only because I am with you; but, in the former, you will be pious from principle, though no human eye rest upon you, and your prayers will then be acceptable. I will now drop the subject."

"I should be much pleased, mamma, if you would give us some further instructions on this interesting subject," said Maria.—"And I," added Jane, "join in the request."

Frances and Teresa were silent; but the governess, wishing to engage her pupils in a conversation that could not fail to be profitable, and which, from its familiar style, was likely to make a lasting impression on the memory, begged Lady Alton to comply with Maria's wish.

"Then let me propose the first question, mamma," said Frances; "for you know I like to be talking."—"With much pleasure, my love; but I must desire you to retain it in your memory till another opportunity, as my watch assures me, that I have no more time at my disposal this afternoon. I have promised to meet your papa and our visitors on their return; and, with your governess's permission, I will take you all with me."

This was an unexpected pleasure, and the young ladies were soon prepared to accompany Lady Alton.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"HERE comes mamma!" exclaimed Frances. "I thought she mentioned that she was going out, and could not sit with us this afternoon."

"I did purpose it," said her ladyship, taking a chair; "but being indisposed with a slight headache, I declined riding, and am come to chat with you for a short time. What are we to talk about? It must be something useful."

"Will you resume the subject of yesterday's instruction, mamma, on the holy sacrifice of the mass?" asked Maria.—"Most willingly, provided it be in the form of a familiar conversation."

"Then, if you please, I will ask the first question, as I proposed yesterday," said Frances: "do people who come into the chapel when mass is nearly half over, fulfil the precept?"—"If the mass be of obligation, they certainly do not. Divines are unanimously of opinion, that those who are not present at the gospel, are guilty of mortal sin: and that it ought to be heard from the commencement, as otherwise we lose many of the graces which are attached to it. We should also arrive rather before the time appointed, that we may endeavor to collect our scattered thoughts, and prepare ourselves to assist at this august sacrifice with the requisite dispositions."

"Then I suppose," said Frances, "that all those persons whom I see entering the chapel so late, do not hear mass, and are guilty of mortal sin."

"Forbear to judge, my love," replied her mother; "it belongs not to us to condemn any one. Our Saviour has said, 'Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned.' Various causes, unknown to us, may prevent some individuals from being in time; and if those causes are unavoidable on their part, no sin will be imputed to them. But if the delay arise from slothfulness, too great attention to dress, or general negligence in the service of God, it is a formal violation of the precept, and, as such, highly censurable. Nothing but illness, or absolute necessity, can relieve us from the obligation of hearing mass on Sundays and holidays; and to hear it according to the intention of the church, we ought to be present from the beginning."

"But can no excuse be made in favor of persons employed all the week in their business," asked Jane, "if they omit hearing mass sometimes on Sundays, when an opportunity occurs of going on a party of pleasure? I have known many Protestants act in a similar manner."

"And, I fear, some few Catholics," observed the governess, "are less particular than they should be; but such conduct is by no means tolerated by the church; pleasure must ever yield to the duty we owe to God."

"Among Protestants, my dear Jane," resumed Lady Alton, "it is not considered of strict obligation to attend the morning office of the church, and, therefore, many absent themselves, when business or pleasure comes in the way. With Catholics the obligation is absolute, and no prayers

said at any other time of the day, can compensate for the voluntary omission of hearing mass. Such, therefore, as will not sacrifice pleasure to duty, pursue it at the risk of a formal violation of the precept of the church, and are guilty of mortal sin."

"Still it appears hard, mamma," interrupted Maria, "that persons who are obliged to work for their bread, who are employed from Monday morning till Saturday evening in some sedentary business, cannot occasionally enjoy themselves on a Sunday, if they wish to set out at an early hour, without incurring the guilt of mortal sin. I admit there can be no excuse for people whose time is at their own disposal; as is ours, for instance."

"It is not our province, Maria," resumed Lady Alton, "to give laws to our Creator. It is he who has commanded the seventh day to be kept holy; we have, therefore, no right to dispute his will. He has appropriated six days to our use, and claims for himself only a part of the seventh; surely, then, we ought not to refuse him this small tribute of our obedience and love. Moreover, the very persons whose cause you plead, are they for whom the repose of the sabbath is most essential. Occupied as they are, during the six days, in the concerns of this world, the rest and leisure of Sunday are the more necessary, to enable them to investigate the condition of their souls, and provide for a future existence; duties to which they have not, they say, time to attend in the course of the week. If a certain degree of relaxation is requisite for the health of the body, reflection and meditation are still more so for the well-being of the soul. The former can only last for a few years, while the latter must endure for eternity, in a state of exquisite happiness, or inconceivable woe."

"Is it, then, sufficient," said Maria, "to hear a low mass, and may we spend the remainder of the day in walking, visiting or idleness, if we feel so disposed?"—"By no means, my love," answered her ladyship. "Sunday is the day appointed by the Almighty to be set apart for his service, and, as I observed before, to provide for the salvation of our souls. We ought, therefore, to devote the greater portion of it to the accomplishment of the objects in view, by assisting at the public offices of the church, listening attentively to the sermon, frequenting the sacra-

ments, and reading good books. When these duties are fulfilled, there will yet be time for innocent recreation."

"You always require us to be present at vespers; yet I think I have heard you observe, that this is not of obligation; and I am sure, if I were at liberty to act as I pleased, I should often find an excuse to absent myself."

"It strikes me, Frances," interrupted Miss Hargrave, "that if you could dispense with the duty of prayer entirely, you would be glad to do so."

"This is rather a severe reflection on you, my child; yet I fear it is but too well merited," said Lady Alton. "I trust you will endeavor to think more seriously on matters connected with religion, and then reproof will be no longer called for. Frances is, I am sorry to say, by no means a solitary instance of indifference for the afternoon service of the church. We are certainly not obliged to be present at vespers, under pain of mortal sin; still, we cannot habitually absent ourselves through sloth or indifference, without incurring some degree of guilt. When we are lawfully prevented from attending, we should never fail to recite the prayers used on the occasion, or some others, with the same view, as soon as our leisure permits. It is much to be lamented, that far the greater number of Catholics are so careless on this head. We do not sanctify the Sunday in a proper manner, by giving to Almighty God only a portion of the morning—he claims also our public homage in the afternoon. It is a subject of particular astonishment, that this negligence should prevail in those districts where the benediction is given, as that alone ought to be sufficient to induce us to attend."

"I wish to know, mamma, whether it is allowable to sit during the greater part of mass? I notice many persons who seldom kneel, except at the elevation and communion. I often remain on my knees till I am tired, because I think it improper to sit down."

"Your zeal, my dear Maria," replied Lady Alton, "must not carry you so far as to make you condemn others, because they do not act according to your ideas of right and wrong. Those who sit when you imagine they ought to kneel, may be fully justified in doing so, by some infirmity or delicacy of constitution, to which you are a stranger. But when bodily indisposition does not render indulgence necessary, we should never allow sloth or indolence."

lence to prevail in so great a degree, as to induce us to hear mass in a sitting or reclining posture. The holy sacrifice very rarely exceeds half an hour, and during that time, we are relieved by standing at the Gospel and Creed."

"I have remarked," said Frances, "that most people make it a rule to sit, from the Creed till after the Offertory."

"Many do," resumed her ladyship; "but custom is not always an infallible guide. It is not my intention, however, to censure the habits of others in this respect, although my opinion is, that during the Offertory, which is not the least essential part of the mass, we ought either to kneel or stand. Our prayers and intentions should be united to those of the priest, as by this means we become joint offerers with him. As humble applicants to the throne of mercy, we should ever present our petitions in that suppliant attitude which suits best with our condition of sinners, depending entirely on the divine bounty. At high mass, you sit during the 'Gloria,' Epistle, and Creed; and when the singing is very protracted, you may, if you feel fatigued, avail yourself of a few minutes for the same purpose, as often as the priest is obliged to wait for the choir."

"I suppose," said Frances, "if we have heard a low mass, and thus fulfilled the obligation, we need not be so particularly attentive at high mass, but amuse one's mind a little by looking about, and listening to the singers; for during the Gloria and the Creed, there is nothing for one to do."

"Frances," rejoined Lady Alton, "the divine sacrifice of the mass is invariably the same. It is always the self-same victim, Jesus Christ, that is offered by the hands of the priest; and, consequently, though you should have heard a dozen masses, the same respect, the same attention of mind, is due to the last as to the first. To have heard previously a low mass on Sundays and holidays, can by no means authorize inattention or indifference afterwards."

"But, mamma, the music is generally so long, that after having read what the choir sings, I know not how to occupy my thoughts."

"Those only who have little love for God, and a very imperfect knowledge of their own weakness and necessities,

will make this complaint. The different parts of the mass, sung by the choir, will afford abundant matter for meditation to the contemplative mind; and those whose volatile imaginations cannot be easily restrained, should occupy themselves in vocal prayer. Every instant of this holy time should be rendered profitable, and the church be considered as a house of worship, and not as a theatre."

"But I use a missal," interrupted Frances; "and that, you know, does not contain any prayers. I should hate to be surrounded with a number of books, for I have heard some people censured for it."

"It would not be well, Frances," resumed her mother, "to make a parade of carrying a whole library to church; but two books will neither inconvenience you, nor subject you to criticism. The various litanies, the penitential psalms, and the beautiful petitions of the 'Jesus Psalter,' will furnish you with constant employment. Did we but reflect on our multiplied wants, our proneness to evil, and our entire dependence on God, we should not fail to employ every moment of leisure, during this august solemnity of the Christian church, in humble and fervent prayer."

"What prayers," asked Maria, "are most proper during the time of mass? or may we recite such as we like best?"

"We ought to accompany the priest, as nearly as we can, in all those parts which are not peculiar to him, as is the consecration. We should not consider ourselves as mere spectators of this awful sacrifice, but as having the special privilege of being joint offerers with him. At the 'Confiteor,' therefore, humble yourself before God, acknowledging your manifold transgressions. At the 'Kyrie eleison,' implore the divine mercy by the same reiterated supplication which the priest makes for that end. Repeat with him, in sentiments of grateful praise, the beautiful hymn which follows. The Collects should next engage our attention. In them the church puts up her prayers to obtain, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the various graces and blessings of which her children stand in need. Then come the Epistle and Gospel, which consist of short portions of scripture, replete with instruction. They should, accordingly, be read with great respect, and carefully treasured up in the memory, to serve either as incentives to virtue, or as means of deterring us from vice. By the



Creed we make profession of our faith, and we ought to recite it with much attention, giving thanks to God for having brought us to the admirable light of his holy faith."

"I observe, mamma," said Frances, "that the Creed is not said every day. Why so?"—"Because, my love, it is not necessary every day to make this solemn profession of faith. It is always said on Sundays and the principal festivals."

"I have remarked," interrupted Maria, "that the 'Gloria in excelsis' is also frequently omitted, which I am always sorry for, as I consider the words particularly fine."

"It is indeed a beautiful composition, breathing the most sublime acts of praise and thanksgiving to God. Being a hymn of joy, it is omitted on occasions of mourning and penance, as during Advent, Lent, and on other penitential days, when the church discontinues her songs of triumph, to pour forth her prayers in the language of humble supplication. I must now leave you, my dear girls," said her ladyship, looking at her watch; "for I perceive it is late. I think you must be almost tired of this serious discourse; but I am pleased with your attention, and we will return to the subject at a future opportunity."

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

LADY ALTON had been prevented by a succession of visitors, for the last three weeks, from passing the afternoon, as usual, with her children. The departure of her guests once more left her at liberty, and her company was anxiously desired by the young ladies, to whom she had promised some trifling presents, as rewards for their good behavior, and attention to study. "I wish mamma would come!" said Teresa, who was unable to settle to any employment; "for I long to see what she has got for me. Papa said I should have a large doll; I wonder whether he has thought any more about it!" Teresa had not much longer to remain in suspense. Her listening ears announced the approach of footsteps, and she flew to open the door. "It is dear mamma!" exclaimed the young ladies, who in a moment surrounded their mother, and eagerly inquired

what she had brought them.—“So many applicants at once,” said her ladyship, smiling, “are more than I can answer without taking breath. Let me sit down, and then I will display my treasures. But each one must take her turn; and as Teresa is the youngest, I will give her the preference to-day, as I have heard a very flattering account of her conduct. See! my love, what a fine large doll your papa has fixed on. I hope it will meet your approbation.”

“Oh, dear mamma!” cried Teresa, in an ecstasy of joy; “what a beauty! what pretty hair! what lovely eyes! why, it is almost as big as Mrs. Jennet’s baby! but it is not dressed, mamma. Will you not give orders to have some clothes made for her?”

“Yes, Teresa; but her dress must be the produce of your own industry. One of your sisters will cut out and fix the clothes, and then they must be made by yourself; and on no other condition can I leave the doll with you. What says my little idler? will she undertake the task?”—“Oh, yes, mamma,” said the delighted child; “I will work so fast, that she shall be dressed in a week; may we go directly to buy some cloth and muslin?”—“Not directly, Teresa,” returned the fond but prudent mother; “it must be when your governess finds it convenient; till then, restrain your impatience. This industrious temper, I fear, will not last long. I give you a month to perform your task. If, in that time, it shall be accomplished in a proper manner, I will further reward you with a pretty box, fitted up with every thing useful for work.”—“Thank you, thank you, my dear, sweet mamma! I must give you a thousand kisses. You shall see how diligently I will exert myself every day to obtain what you promise.”

“Have you not done with Teresa?” interrupted Frances; “I am impatient to know whether the music, which I perceive, is for me. I wonder what my master would say, if he knew I had any that was not of his choosing; I am tired of his dull lessons.”

“His dull lessons, as you call them, are, nevertheless, necessary for your improvement, and you must practise them diligently. The two sonatas, which your papa has chosen, are rather difficult; but he wishes you to study them alone, that he may judge of your proficiency.”

“I am glad they are difficult, and I will take pains to

learn them well. I hate common, easy pieces, that every one can execute, for they afford no room for the display of talent, and, therefore, no credit is to be gained by them. A composition which presents no difficulties, is not worth any attention. I will devote two hours a day to practise these, and you shall hear them in a fortnight."

"Beware of conceit, my dear Frances," said her mother, in a gentle but serious tone; "let not vanity influence your exertions, lest you become a slave to that which is intended only for recreation. I am not ambitious that a child of mine should attract the public gaze, by the display of any extraordinary skill in this delightful science; for be assured, that if you gain the admiration of some, you will excite the envy and malice of others. I request you will bestow, on the practice of these sonatas, only one half hour in addition to the two which you already devote to this pursuit. Two, or, at the very utmost, three hours a day, are all that should be employed in this acquirement, by those who do not make it their profession. Remember, my sweet girl," continued her ladyship, kissing off the starting tear of mortified pride, "that the talent you possess for music is the gift of God. Be grateful, and improve it, yet not at the expense of other more useful and solid accomplishments. But enough; I know you will try to please me; and, while I endeavor to moderate your thirst for fame, will avoid the contrary extreme, and not suffer negligence or inattention to sink you below mediocrity."

"What have you brought me?" interrupted Maria; "I observe that you have some drawings."—"Yes, my love, they are intended for you, drawing being your favorite pursuit. Among them, is a head of our Saviour, from one of the best masters. To make a correct copy of this production will be rather an arduous undertaking; but your usual diligence will enable you to accomplish it to our satisfaction; I beg, however, that the performance may be entirely your own."

"What a noble countenance!" exclaimed Maria, who was exceedingly fond of the pencil. "I fear it will not be in my power to do justice to so fine a subject, but I will be as careful as I possibly can. This face is so beautiful," continued the young enthusiast, "I shall kiss it every time I set about my lesson."

"Confine not your admiration, my dear Maria, to the mere picture, though a well-executed work of art, but carry your thoughts to the divine original, and, with silent but grateful acknowledgments, thank our merciful Redeemer for his unceasing blessings. Kiss the picture as often as you please, but let it be always with the respect due to him, of whose incomparable beauty it conveys, at the best, but a very imperfect idea. Beg of him to inflame your heart with his love, and make you ever faithful to his heavenly grace."

"Thank you, dear mamma," said the affectionate Maria, fondly embracing her mother; "I will endeavor to profit by your kind remarks. Have you thought of Jane?"—"Yes; here are two books, of which I beg her acceptance. They are on serious subjects, but I know they will not, on that account, be less valuable in her estimation. It affords me no small satisfaction to reward you for your general good conduct; and if, at the end of every three months, your governess, my dear girls, is able to continue her favorable report, I shall most willingly continue my presents."

"Will you, indeed, give us something pretty every three months, mamma?" interrupted Teresa; "and may we choose what we like best?"—"If you can furnish me with testimonials of merit from Miss Hargrave, I promise you a recompense; and as far as it is prudent, you shall select that which is most agreeable to yourself. Endeavor, therefore, to deserve whatever you particularly wish for, and, if possible, I will not refuse it."

"I fear these promises, and this kind indulgence on the part of your ladyship, will induce my dear pupils to conduct themselves well only in the hope of reward, instead of being virtuous from principle, and from the consciousness, that the path of virtue, though narrow, is the only one that leads to happiness."

"I shall have no cause to fear that," replied Lady Alton, "as long as they are under your tuition, because I am assured, that your penetration will soon discover the motives of their actions, and your love of justice prevent you from suffering me to be deceived. Virtue is in herself so amiable, that, if I allure them into her path by a few sugar-plums, they will speedily be captivated by her loveliness, and resolve never to quit her society. Continual

endeavors to overcome their imperfections, though proceeding at first from the mercenary hope of reward, will, I trust, establish those habits of thinking and acting right, from which no circumstances hereafter will ever induce them to swerve. It would, indeed, seriously afflict me, if I thought them capable of restraining their passions now, on the understanding that, when freed from the control of parental authority, they would allow them full indulgence. But I hope better things, and—”

“Dear mamma,” interrupted Maria, “we will exert ourselves to be all you wish; not for the sake of your presents, but because we love you, and desire to render you happy; and also because we cannot please God, unless we faithfully perform what you and our governess require of us, as well when you are absent as when we are immediately under your eye. Will you now continue your observations on the prayers we ought to say during mass?”

“Do, mamma,” said Frances; “and I hope you will not have to censure me again for behaving disrespectfully, as I have resolved to be more attentive for the future.”

“I am happy, my dear child, to hear you say so; may you have grace to persevere in this resolution, and, be assured, you will feel the comfort of it. I have half an hour to spare, and am willing to employ it as you request. Where are we to begin?”—“At the Offertory, if you please,” was the answer.

“I cannot, my dear children, recommend any prayers more appropriate, than those which the church makes use of at this part of her solemn office. Unite yourself and your intention with that of the priest. Offer to God your whole being, your condition, talents, and whatever you possess, to be dedicated to his service, and consecrated to him, from whose sole bounty flows every blessing you enjoy. These affections will, perhaps, occupy you during the whole of the offertory; if not, use the prayers which you find in the missal, at the mixing of the wine and water; or, if you prefer it, recite the following one, which is found in some other books of devotion: ‘Mingle, oh, my sweet Saviour! as thou hadst water and blood mingled together in thy sacred side, water with my wine, that is, temper, O Lord! my prosperity and adversity so together, as that I may never be puffed up with the one, nor oppressed with the other.’ When the priest offers up the chalice, you will

do well to repeat the prayer which he uses, as the object of it is, to implore the grace of salvation for ourselves, and all mankind. Observe, also, that, at the oblation of the chalice, the priest employs the word *we*: 'We offer to thee, O Lord!' This shows that our intention ought to be united to his, and that we should not consider ourselves as mere spectators, but joint offerers with him.

"The two short prayers which follow deserve, likewise, our attention. In the first, we pray, that the Almighty will accept us in the spirit of humility and contrition, and that the sacrifice which we offer may be pleasing in his sight. In the second, the priest supplicates the blessing of God, on that which is prepared to be sacrificed to the glory of his holy name; and in this we ought devoutly to join with him."

"Why does the priest wash his hands, mamma?" asked Teresa; "surely they are not dirty."—"Certainly not," replied her mother. "This ceremony is meant to indicate the purity which is requisite, in those who offer this august sacrifice. Our divine Redeemer, before he distributed his most sacred body and blood to his apostles, condescended to the humiliating act of washing their feet. This he did, not merely to give them an example of humility, but also to show, by this exterior act, the great inward purity which is required, in order to approach worthily these sacred mysteries. The priest, you observe, does not wash his hands, but only the ends of his fingers, to signify, that he should not only be free from great sins, but also from all affection to those smaller faults, which, though they do not destroy the grace of God, nevertheless defile the soul, and render it less pleasing in his sight."

"What ought to be the object of our prayers at this time?" said Maria.—"To beg earnestly of Almighty God, that he would cleanse us from every stain of sin; that, in union with his minister at the altar, we may be made worthy to partake of the merits of the divine victim which he is about to offer. For this end, you may either pray mentally, or have recourse to the prayers which you find in your book."

"I believe the preface follows next," interrupted Jane; "pray what is the meaning of it?"—"It is as it were," continued Lady Alton, "a kind of prologue to the more solemn parts of the mass, and it ought to excite us to more

lively attention. Hitherto, the priest has been preparing himself, the people, and the bread and wine; now, he endeavors to dispose the hearts and affections of the assistants, for the joint offering of this great sacrifice, by disengaging their thoughts from creatures. For this object he says; 'Raise up your hearts.' We should answer, that our hearts are lifted up, and then, with all possible fervor, should accompany him in that effusion of thanksgiving and praise, desiring to join with the cherubim and seraphim, in their acts of adoration and love; praying that our voices may be permitted, here on earth, to mingle with those of the blessed spirits in heaven, who sing, without ceasing, before the throne of the Most High: 'Holy! Holy! Holy!'"

"Why is the bell rung at this time?" asked Teresa.—"To call the attention of the congregation to that which is performing at the altar; because, in large churches, many of the assistants can neither see the altar, nor hear the priest. The bell is usually rung at the 'Sanctus,' the elevation, and the communion; and the sound of it frequently tends to recall our wandering thoughts, and remind us of the homage which we ought then to pay to God."

"The canon, I think I have heard you say, is the most solemn part of the mass: will your ladyship please to explain it?" said Miss Mordaunt.—"It certainly is the most solemn part. I shall not, however, enter into minute particulars, but treat the subject briefly, in order that you may more easily retain my remarks; though every word uttered by the priest is deserving of our consideration, and every action that he performs, has an important meaning."

"When I have finished the preface," interrupted Maria, "I generally lay aside the missal, and use the 'Daily Companion,' or some prayer-book that contains the mass in English. The words are not exactly those which the priest makes use of, but the sense, I believe, is the same, and I understand it better."

"You are perfectly right, my love, and had you not accustomed yourself to that method, I should have advised you to adopt it; not because the prayers you have made choice of are better in themselves, or more adapted to the ends of the sacrifice, but because I think them more cal-

culated to fix the attention of children and illiterate persons.

"At the beginning of the canon, we ought to unite ourselves anew to the priest, and, with and through him, recommend to God his holy church, entreating him to supply her necessities, to extend her conquests, to protect her against her enemies, and to bless her ministers. We should pray generally for all the clergy and religious, and particularly for the pope, the bishop of our district or diocese, the officiating priest, and our spiritual director. We must, also, turn our thoughts to our parents, relations and friends, imploring our divine Lord to shower down on them his choicest benedictions; and, lastly, we must crave the mercy of God for ourselves, laying before him our wants, our weakness, and our inability to do the least good, without the special assistance of his grace. We should then renew our particular intention in hearing mass, and ask generally, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for those blessings we are most desirous to obtain."

"I think, mamma," said Frances, "I shall pray for my own wants first; otherwise, if I enter into all the details you mention for others, I shall not have time to utter a word for myself."—"Self, my dear Frances," observed Miss Hargrave, "is ever predominant in your mind; but I am decidedly of opinion, that those who are interested in the welfare of others, will not be sufferers themselves, though they should not have time to specify their own necessities; so much value does the Almighty set on works of charity."

"Charity!" exclaimed Teresa; "I thought that consisted only in giving money."—"By no means," said Miss Hargrave. "The most sublime acts of charity are those in which the spiritual good of our neighbor is consulted; and these acts we perform, when we beg of God to bestow on others those graces and blessings which are necessary to ensure their eternal happiness. But this digression trespasses on the time of your mamma; we will, therefore, be silent, and listen to her."

Her ladyship resumed—"By the time we have finished our 'memento for the living,' the bell admonishes us to direct our attention to what the priest is about to perform at the altar. The moment approaches, in which he will really offer to the eternal Father, the same Lord and Saviour who immolated himself, for our salvation, on Mount



Calvary. The second bell intimates, that the powerful words of consecration have been pronounced. The priest, therefore, kneels to adore, not bread and wine, as the outward appearances might still lead us to suppose, but Jesus Christ himself, the Son of the living God, the second person of the blessed Trinity, that same Lord and Saviour who offered himself once for us, in a bloody manner, on Mount Calvary, and now daily offers himself, in an unbloody manner, on thousands of altars, under the eucharistic forms of bread and wine.”—“How ought we to be employed at this time, mamma?” inquired Maria.

“We ought to join with the priest in acts of faith, and profound adoration; in acts of gratitude and love. With and through him, we should offer this divine holocaust or victim, and pray that the merits of the precious blood of Jesus may be applied to our souls, for the remission of our sins. We should endeavor to place ourselves in spirit on Mount Calvary, and awaken in our souls those affections we should have entertained, had we been spectators of the cruel torments, which our divine Redeemer there endured. The priest next recites his ‘memento for the dead.’”

“Are the dead really helped by our prayers, mamma?” asked the giddy Frances; “and are we obliged to pray for them? I cannot say, that hitherto they have ever engaged my thoughts.”

“That souls departed are benefited by our prayers, there can be no doubt, since we are told in scripture, that ‘it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead.’ That it is a very ancient custom, we have proof in Judas Macabeus, who desired that sacrifice should be offered for those who were slain in battle. You are, therefore, guilty of a great fault, my dear Frances, in not joining in this devout practice. Self-interest, if you are unwilling to act from a more generous principle, should incite you to this spiritual act of mercy.”

“I have not been so unfortunate as to lose a near relation,” resumed Frances, “or any one whom I esteem; and, therefore, I did not consider it necessary to trouble myself about strangers, people I neither know nor care for.”

“You have, indeed, shown a want of thought, Frances,” continued her mother, “which nothing but your youth, giddiness, and consequent ignorance, can hitherto have excused. Remember, however, in future, that your having

been spared the pain of losing any dear friend or relation, can never constitute a sufficient reason for the neglect of this charitable duty. To love our neighbor as ourselves, is one of the commands of Jesus Christ, and this love must extend beyond the grave. We are bound, also, to desire the greater glory of God in all things; and how can we contribute to this more effectually, than by praying for the release of the souls in purgatory, since, the sooner they are emancipated from their state of suffering, the sooner will they be capable of adoring and praising God. And if we, by our prayers and alms, have been so fortunate, as to conduce to their more speedy admission to the ineffable joys of heaven, surely they will, in gratitude, remember us before the throne of mercy, and become our powerful intercessors.

“Let me exhort you, my dear children, never to disregard the comfort of those afflicted souls, who, unable themselves to merit the least indulgence, must remain prisoners till they have paid the utmost farthing, unless our charity induce us to compassionate their sufferings, and earnestly petition for their enlargement.”—“What prayers are best adapted to this purpose?” said Maria.

“There can be none so efficacious as the divine sacrifice of the mass. Avail yourselves, therefore, of the precious moments in which it is celebrated, to plead fervently in behalf of the faithful departed. The mercy of God is exhaustless, and he can refuse nothing that is solicited through the merits of his beloved Son. I am also persuaded, that he even rejoices to find his infinite justice against these predestinated souls thus disarmed.”

“I think the ‘Our Father’ comes next,” said Teresa.—“It does, my love, and we should never fail to recite it, and to reflect on the import of the words. It should be our favorite prayer, because it is that which Jesus Christ has taught us, and it contains all that we have need to ask for. The ‘Agnus Dei’ presently follows, and this we shall do well to repeat, imploring our divine Lord to extend his mercy to us, and grant us the blessing of his peace, which is the object of the last repetition of the ‘Agnus Dei,’ and the prayer which succeeds to it.”

“What ought those to do at the communion,” inquired Jane, “who do not receive?”—“They ought to say, with profound humility of heart, and with sentiments of a lively

faith, the prayer of the centurion, which the priest recites three times; and endeavor to enkindle in their souls an ardent desire to be made partakers of that heavenly food, in which Jesus Christ gives himself, with all the treasures of his grace, to those who receive him worthily. The favor of daily sacramental communion is granted to very few; but we should always make a spiritual communion, when we have the happiness to hear mass. Neither is it necessary to limit this holy exercise to that occasion, for it may be performed, with benefit to the soul, at any hour, and in any place. A moment may suffice to unite ourselves to him who is ever thinking of us. Never, therefore, my dear children, omit this exercise at the time of mass, lest you should be deprived of a large share of the merits of this holy sacrifice."

"Have you almost done, mamma?" inquired Teresa. "I just recollect, that my nurse desired me to tell you something."

"I will not confine your attention much longer, my dear. We have touched, I think, on the principal parts of this most solemn act of our religion. It remains only to observe, that the prayers said by the priest, after the communion, are acts of praise and thanksgiving for the favor he has received, and effusions of gratitude to our divine Lord, for vouchsafing to renew, in behalf of his unworthy creatures, the sacrifice of the cross. On this occasion, also, we shall do well to accompany the priest. The mass usually concludes with the Gospel of St. John, at the reading of which we should stand up, and recite it with sentiments of a lively faith in the sublime mysteries therein contained."

"I notice," said Jane, "that the priest sometimes gives his blessing to the people, and at other times does not. Is he, then, at liberty to act in this respect as he pleases?"

"No, my love; the ceremony is only omitted in masses for the dead. It was, of old, commanded by Almighty God, that the priests should bless the people; and we read, in the Book of Numbers, that he himself prescribed the form. This holy custom is, therefore, continued to the present day; and we should receive the blessing with humility, as if it came from God himself. When mass is finished, hasten not out of the chapel, as if you had already staid too long, but remain a few moments to return thanks

to God for the favor you have received. There is no doubt, if we hear mass with the proper dispositions, that it will be the means of preserving us from many evils, which might otherwise befall us in the course of the day, and serve as a protection against the snares of the devil, who is ever on the watch to draw us into sin. Does not the catechism contain some remarks on the advantages of hearing mass?"

"Yes," replied Maria; "it says, 'There are many: first, it applies the merits of our Saviour's passion for the remission of our sins; secondly, it procures new graces and blessings for us, by virtue of the said passion; and, thirdly, it is the most acceptable offering we can make to Almighty God, in thanksgiving for all his benefits.'"

"Observe, then, my dear children," continued Lady Alton, "the numerous advantages that result from our being present, with devotion, at these divine mysteries. Thus we obtain, through the merits of the passion of Christ, the remission of those smaller sins into which we are continually falling. Thus we procure those graces and blessings of which we are in need, to support us in the way of virtue, and to strengthen us against the temptations of the world, and our own corrupt nature. No private prayers that we may offer, as thanksgiving for benefits received, however long or fervent they may be, can possess equal merit in the sight of God. Endeavor, therefore, to assist every day at this great sacrifice of the Christian church, not from custom, but from affection, and because it is a duty which (when circumstances permit) we undoubtedly owe to God. Let not sloth, nor concerns of inferior moment, prevent your regular attendance. What excuse, indeed, can be urged by those who have no necessary employment, for absenting themselves from this solemn act of religion, which, though not daily of obligation, ought always to be performed by us with cheerfulness, and even with delight?"

"I have engaged your attention a long time, my dear girls, but the subject is of importance; and though it has not been very fully explained, you will, I hope, derive advantage from my observations. Adieu till evening."

## CHAPTER XXX.

"WHAT think you of a walk this evening, my dear girls?" said Lady Alton, entering the apartment in which her two elder daughters were sitting alone. "As your governess is gone out with Teresa and Jane, I have undertaken to provide amusement for you."

"I shall be very happy to accompany you, mamma," said Maria; "I enjoy an evening walk. The day has been extremely warm and oppressive."

"Warm, Maria!" interrupted Frances, hastily. "That is a very inadequate term; it has been wretchedly hot—quite insufferable. I have been dying with heat and thirst all day; and if this weather continue, I am sure it will kill me."

"It is your impatience, my love, and not the weather," said Lady Alton, "that produces this melancholy effect. I beg you will not, in future, let me hear you apply to the weather the angry epithets of wretched, insufferable, vile: terms which you are so frequently in the habit of employing, because it does not suit your feelings at the moment. Whatever the Almighty has appointed is good, and it is our duty to submit, without repining, to the dispensations of his providence. That which your selfish feelings now induce you to consider a misery, will prove an abundant source of blessings by and by. Without heat, and the invigorating rays of the sun, the fruits of the earth could not be matured, and brought to the perfection necessary for our use; and if Almighty God, to punish our murmuring and discontent, were to regulate the weather according to our wayward fancies, we should soon be exposed to all the horrors of famine. Endeavor, then, my dear child, to arm yourself against this spirit of impatience, and allow not such trifles as the state of the atmosphere, continually to rob you of your peace of mind. This irritability of temper, if not corrected, will grow upon you, and you will become a torment to yourself and others."

"I do not believe," said Frances, peevishly, "that any one suffers so much from heat as I do."—"You think so, my sweet girl," said the tender mother, "because you do not hear others always complaining; yet it is probable, that their sensations are quite as acute as your own. The weather, unfortunately, seldom pleases you; it is invariably

either too hot or too cold. Do not become like those selfish beings who, ever absorbed by their own real or fancied miseries, are incapable of feeling for the sufferings of others, and who, consequently, as they always imagine their own burthen the heaviest, can find no alleviation by reflecting, that thousands are more wretched than themselves. You are inconvenienced by the heat, no doubt; but consider that others suffer from the same cause, and in a much greater degree. The condition of the laborers in the fields, for example, who toil beneath the mid-day sun to contribute to our comforts, should silence all complaints, and induce us to raise our hearts with gratitude to the beneficent Creator, who provides so abundantly for our wants at the expense of others' labor. Bear patiently the evil you cannot remove, and respect the decrees of him, without whose permission the sun would not continue to warm the air, nor the rain to fertilize the land. Thus you will be tranquil and contented, whether the day be hot or cold, wet or dry. But, enough; if you mean to walk, we must set out. Maria is ready, and your papa will be waiting."

"I do not like to be left alone," said Frances, making an effort to resume her usual cheerfulness; "so I will forget that it is hot, and overtake you before you reach the hall door."

"Well, girls," said Sir James, after they had proceeded a few hundred yards, "which way shall we go? Here are two paths, one to the right, the other to the left: in a moral sense, one leads to happiness, the other to misery."

"Maria would say," observed Frances, "that we ought always to take the right; but the left, I know, is often the more pleasant, as it appears to be now. This, to the left, a shady and winding path, seems very inviting; the other is straight, and full of loose pebbles, which are not particularly agreeable to walk on. Do you know, papa, to what places these roads lead?"

"That to the right, my love," replied Sir James, "is a short and little frequented path to a beautiful spot in Mr. Essington's grounds, which well repays the inconvenience the rough walking may have caused. The other, which you are inclined to pursue, conducts only to a sort of precipice, at the bottom of which is a small, stagnant lake

The walk is certainly pleasant, and Frances shall be indulged, as, in this instance, she may take the road to the left without danger. What makes you so thoughtful, Maria?"

"I have been amusing myself, papa, by making some reflections on your description of the two roads."—"I am aware that you are inclined to moralize," said her father; "pray let us benefit by your meditations."

"Indeed, papa, they are not worth your notice," replied the timid girl; "but as you always encourage me to express my sentiments, I will tell you what has occupied my thoughts. The road to the right, which you describe as narrow and intersected with briers, may remind us of the narrow path which the gospel points out, where we must expect to meet with temptations to oppose our advancement in the way of virtue. The rough stones that are scattered over the path, and would often hurt our feet, but not entirely deter us from proceeding, may be compared to the numberless venial transgressions into which we continually fall. These retard our progress, though they do not make us quit the road, nor finally prevent us from reaching heaven—the beautiful spot you describe, where our labors will terminate, and our perseverance be rewarded with eternal repose. The few who frequent this path, may be understood to mean the small number of those who enter the narrow way of evangelical perfection."

"That is not amiss, Maria," said Sir James. "Now what have you to say of the path *we* have chosen?"

"Not much, papa," returned the youthful moralist; "but as it is so alluring, at first sight, that we readily enter it, in preference to the other, though it is closed by a dreary waste, it may signify the enjoyment which we experience, for a time, in following our own will, gratifying our passions, and indulging, without restraint, in the pleasures of the world. But, after a life thus employed, we shall find ourselves, unexpectedly, on the edge of the precipice, which, you say, terminates this broad and level walk, and be suddenly plunged into the lake below, which represents hell, whence there is no means of escape. It will, therefore, be better to choose the narrow path, though it is, in many respects, the more toilsome."

"Our walk, my love," said the delighted father, "is not an idle one, since it has produced these salutary reflections.

Endeavor constantly to draw a lesson of morality and virtue from every thing you see and hear, and you will not fail to improve both yourself and others. How many ladies there are who, from not paying attention to the early culture of their intellectual capabilities, pass through life without any solid enjoyments! Having few resources in themselves, they depend on others for amusement: their conversation, therefore, is generally insipid, frivolous and vain; and if they marry a man of domestic habits and refined understanding, they soon become weary of each other's company."

"Is it, then, your opinion, papa," interrupted Maria, "that ladies ought to receive a classical education?"

"No, my love," answered Sir James, "far from it; but as they are destined by nature to be the companions of men, are endowed by their Creator with the same noble faculties of mind, and are gifted, in a special manner, with the power to please, I could wish that, by a judicious system of instruction, they might be induced to rise superior to the frivolities which too commonly engross their thoughts. In addition to the polite accomplishments they generally acquire, let them learn whatever else may be peculiarly suitable to their sex and station; but, above all, let their mental powers be cultivated with more assiduous care than is, in most cases, bestowed on them, and they will prove far less insipid companions. The greater number of young ladies of fashion can be interested or kept in humor by our sex, only while we address them in the language of flattery: we must admire what they admire, and condemn what they disapprove, or we cease to engage their notice. Does not their whole conversation relate to their dress, their pleasures, their disappointments, except when they entertain themselves and others at the cost of their neighbors' reputation? Can ladies such as these form fit associates for sensible men?"

"Are you not rather too severe upon our sex, my love?" asked Lady Alton.—"There are, no doubt," replied Sir James, "many exceptions, and you are one. I speak in general terms, and, happily, not from personal experience. Our dear girls, likewise, brought up under such a mother, will be of the number of those to whom my observations do not apply. Your ingenuousness, however, must force



you to acknowledge, that the conduct of many of our modern belles sufficiently justifies my criticism."

"I suspect, my dear papa," said Frances, gaily, "that if you think and speak in this manner, you will not be a favorite with the ladies. Will you inform us what occupations you have selected for a woman of fortune? I apprehend they are not such as I very highly approve of. Perhaps you would have her make her own clothes, and attend to the business of the housekeeper."

"I should, on the contrary, my love, wish her to be less occupied with the decoration of her person, and never to think of making any article of apparel for herself, as she would thus deprive those of business who have no other means of support. But as idleness should by all ranks be carefully shunned, and as our sole business in this world is to live well, in order to answer the objects for which we were created, I conceive that, when a young lady has finished her scholastic education, she ought to acquire a perfect knowledge of her domestic duties. She should be accustomed to overlook the accounts of the housekeeper, give the necessary orders for dinner, learn what articles are in season, and be acquainted with the current price of provisions. She should inform herself as to the number of domestics that are requisite, the wages it is usual to allow them, and the quantity and quality of food proper for their maintenance; for parsimony and extravagance ought equally to be avoided. She should labor to acquire great control over her temper, and habituate herself to issue her commands to the servants with dignity, precision and mildness, in order that they may be respected, clearly understood and cheerfully obeyed. As it is the duty of the opulent to relieve the wants of the necessitous, and as the charitable office of clothing the children of the poor usually falls under the cognizance of females, I would recommend a young lady of fortune to ascertain what kind of clothing is most suitable, and what is the most economical manner of providing the materials. She should be able to calculate the expense, in order that she may not be imposed on, in the event of its being necessary to intrust the purchase to others; and if she be further qualified to superintend the cutting out of the various articles, it will be no disgrace to her. These deeds of charity, with the occasional execution of works of taste, either to adorn her

apartments, or to sell for the benefit of the distressed, will afford her a variety of active occupations. Some portion of every day ought also to be devoted to useful reading, and such compositions should be recommended, as would improve her understanding, without dissipating her mind. In her dress, I should wish to see her always neat and simply elegant, but never studiously fine. It is the foible of too many of your sex, to be so much enslaved by the capricious goddess, fashion, and so large a portion of their time is squandered away in the decoration of the person, that they have little leisure to adorn the interior; hence so many corrupt hearts and empty heads."

"But, papa," interrupted Frances, "would you not suffer ladies to dress according to their rank? May they not have more splendid furniture, and richer clothes, than people of low condition? If not, their wealth is of little use to them. I certainly should like to make as respectable a figure in the world as others."

"It is this spirit of rivalry, Frances," rejoined her father, "that in every grade of society does so much mischief; few are content to live within their sphere. People of fortune are undoubtedly justified in maintaining their consequence, by certain exterior appearances of greatness; but this should be done without ostentation or affected parade, and by no means with a view to excite envy. Never, my dear girl, indulge in a wish to eclipse others; for if you do, you will yourself most assuredly be the victim: you will harbor in your bosom a wasp that will severely sting you; because there will always be some more admired and more courted than yourself. Attend to the following little anecdote, which will illustrate my observations.

"Adela de Bertolf was of an ancient family; and, on the death of her mother, whom she had the misfortune to lose while yet an infant, inherited a princely fortune. Her too partial father gratified all her wishes, and would not suffer any one to contradict her; but this mistaken kindness laid the foundation of her future misery. Masters of every description were provided, as soon as Lady Adela was capable of receiving instruction. Her nurse, a respectable widow, by whom she was as much indulged as by her father, was nominated to the office of governess; not that she was peculiarly well qualified to fulfil that

important trust, but because Adela protested that she would have no other. The masters attended regularly. If the wayward girl felt disposed to take her lesson, it was well; if not, she was never to be teased. When they complained to her father of her indolence and caprice, his answer was, "Come at the appointed time; whether she learn or not, you shall be paid." In this manner, year after year rolled on, till the spoiled child became an awkward, illiterate woman, though a fortune had been expended on her education.

"Lady Adela's disposition was a mixture of good and evil; but, unfortunately, the evil predominated. As in a garden, whatever be the soil, noxious weeds will spring up, and, unless carefully destroyed, render fruitless the labors of the cultivator; so, from the human heart, the weeds of evil propensities must be quickly eradicated, lest they take too deep root, and stifle the seeds of virtue. Had Lady Adela been corrected in her youth, she would have grown up an ornament to society; but allowed the full indulgence of her own will, she became a torment to herself and others.

"Pride was the source of her principal failings: she could not bear a rival in dress, equipage or furniture. She married a nobleman of distinguished rank, good disposition, domestic habits, and refined understanding. But such a wife was not calculated to render happy the Count de Normanville: her fortune dazzled him, and he overlooked the defects of temper and education. Her insipid discourse, which never turned but on dress, soon inspired him with a contemptuous opinion of her intellect; while her petulance and caprice subjected him to continual inconvenience and mortification. In company, she appeared the most amiable of women; but her guests were no sooner departed, or herself returned from an assembly, in which she had, perhaps, seen some individual who excelled her in brilliancy of ornaments or richness of apparel, than her husband, and others of her domestic circle, felt the effects of her spleen. This was discharged alike on her own family, and on those persons to whom, but a short time before, she had paid the most flattering compliments.

"New dresses, and a succession of amusements, could alone keep her in spirits and good humor; when these

were wanting, she was miserable. With sense enough to know that she did wrong, and candor to acknowledge her faults, she frequently lamented, in moments of reflection, that she had not been impressed, in early youth, with those sentiments of religion, which would have taught her to curb her violent passions, and bring them under the subjection of reason. Concluding, as is too often the case of those who will not take the necessary trouble, that she was too old to reform, she made no exertion to overcome her defects. The consequence was, that her husband, finding no comfort at home, sought for it elsewhere. By little and little, he abandoned himself to vicious habits, lost every good principle, forsook his religion, and became one of the most profligate of men."

"But, papa," interrupted Frances, "do you attribute all these evils to his having a bad wife? The count was not obliged to do wrong, if his lady did."

"Certainly not, my love; nor do I mean to defend his conduct. I would only observe to you again, that the influence of women in society is so powerful, that the utmost vigilance ought to be used in their education, to enable them to fill, in a becoming manner, the station to which they may be called. With a domestic wife, the count would have been amiable and virtuous; but with one who made not the slightest effort to contribute to his comforts, to consult his taste, or, in a single instance, to promote his happiness, he sunk under the trial, and became a dissolute character. His lady went out of her mind, and died in that afflicting state; a warning to all, not to suffer pride and violent passions to usurp the dominion of reason. Bear in mind also, my dear girls, that where religion is wanting to check our naturally evil propensities, nothing else can effectually subdue them; and be assured, we sacrifice our own happiness and that of those connected with us, when we are not restrained by her salutary influence. No means, therefore, should be left untried to correct the faults of youth; no pains should be spared to eradicate the seeds of vice, and nourish the germs of religion and virtue."

"Lady Adela had many failings, papa," said Maria: "had she no good qualities? It is but fair that we should be acquainted with them also."

"True, my love; you do well to remind me. She

would not marry till she came of age, that she might add considerably to the income of her father, which previously was but small. She also settled a handsome annuity on the governess and her three children ; and for her tender but pernicious indulgence, she ever felt most grateful. To her servants she was a kind mistress. When they were sick, she had them attended with the greatest care, and never lost an opportunity of bettering their condition, and promoting their interests. Though she had adopted the reprehensible custom of travelling on a Sunday, she always so regulated her route, that her attendants might never omit hearing mass : I mention this, because the countess was not a Catholic. Though not charitable from motives of religion, her purse was never closed to the solicitations of the poor ; and I am well persuaded, that her errors were the consequence of a defective education, rather than of a malignant heart. Strive then, my dear girls, to imitate her virtues, while you carefully avoid her faults. This, I am assured, you will effectually do, by attending to the excellent instructions you daily receive. Always consider as your best friends, those who are most anxious to remove the imperfections of your character ; for by their unwearied attention to this particular, they are laying the foundation of your future happiness."

"Then I am sure, papa," interrupted Frances, "I ought to love my governess more than any one else ; because she is always telling me of my faults, and suffers nothing to escape her vigilance. I often think her troublesome, and more exact than it is necessary to be with persons of our rank. I cannot, however, help loving her ; for I am sure she never contradicts me out of passion or ill humor ; and when I do right, she is always very indulgent."

"I am glad, my dear Frances," said Lady Alton, "to find you so sensible of her good-will towards you : it shows that you profit by her care. Be ever grateful for her exertions : your only means of repaying her solicitude is an earnest endeavor to improve."

"And how much, also, are we indebted to our beloved parents," interrupted Maria, "who are so attentive not only to our wants, but even to our wishes. I am persuaded, that when you refuse us any thing we desire, or are obliged to punish, it grieves you more than it does us."

"You are right," said Sir James. "It is certainly a

great pain to deny any thing to those we love ; but you have rarely caused us that affliction. We are very happy in our dear children."

"It is very kind in you, dear papa," said Frances, kissing the hand of her father, by whose side she was walking, "to forget, at this moment, the frequent uneasiness I have occasioned you. But, indeed, I will endeavor to amend my faults, and imitate the conduct of Maria."

"This assurance, my dear child," said Sir James, "affords me much gratification ; because I am confident, that it is your intention to keep your word. I will now refer to an observation which you have just made. You think your governess more particular than it is necessary to be with ladies of your rank. Rank, Frances, cannot exempt us from the obligation of fulfilling the duties of morality and religion ; since both the one and the other, are binding alike on us, and on the poorest beggar. Almighty God makes no exception of persons ; the king and the peasant are equal in his sight ; virtue alone forms any distinction. Wealth and dignity, poverty and dependence, are accidental circumstances, entering into the views of the Divine Wisdom for our mutual good. The affluent would not benefit by their riches, but for the labors of the poor ; and the poor would want the necessaries of life, were they not employed and assisted by the rich. The latter, my dear child, will be summoned to the same tribunal as the former ; when an impartial Judge, neither biassed by fear nor by interest, will pass an unerring and irrevocable sentence on both. In the rigorous examination that will precede this judgment, the affluent will be called to account for their bad example, their prodigality, and abuse of wealth. The poor and needy are intrusted to their charge ; and if they have neglected to relieve their wants, on the plea that they cannot afford it, a question will arise, as to the cause of their inability. If this be found to proceed from extravagance in living, furniture, dress or amusements, they will be condemned to severe punishment ; and happy will it prove for them, if this punishment be not eternal."

"It appears to me, papa," resumed Frances, "from your observations, that there is not much advantage in being wealthy. I used formerly to imagine, that rich people were at liberty to act just as they pleased."

"It is well for you, my dear child, to be, early in life,

disabused of so gross an error. The idea, too often impressed on the minds of young persons, that riches confer, in this regard, unlimited power, is a fatal rock on which many thousands have suffered shipwreck. If our divine Lord has declared, that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, we may be sure, that riches are not possessed without great danger to salvation. Yet, while I am desirous to warn you of that danger, I must not forget to point out the advantages which they procure, and the gratitude that they ought to excite in our hearts, towards the munificent Bestower of them. In conferring an abundance of temporal possessions, the Almighty, as I have had occasion to remark before, has been pleased to appoint us his stewards, and the dispensers of his bounty.

“Can any thing that the world calls pleasure, be compared to the delight which is experienced in relieving the necessities of others? To cheer the drooping heart of the disconsolate widow; to alleviate the sorrows of old age, by removing the apprehension of want; to sooth the afflicted on the bed of sickness, by administering to their comforts; to preserve the houseless orphan from misery and vice, or snatch from the horrors of a prison the industrious, though unfortunate, father of an infant family: these are some of the invaluable advantages which flow from the possession of wealth. If the affluent thus dispose of their superabundance, it will ensure them enjoyments infinitely superior to any gratifications that arise from the display of worldly grandeur. It will obtain for them a reward a hundred-fold, even in this life, by the consciousness that they have contributed largely to the happiness of their fellow creatures. And when they raise their thoughts beyond this transient scene, with what confidence may they not rely on the favor of Heaven; for the prayers of the poor in their behalf have already pierced the clouds.

“If the threats of the Lord against the rich who abuse his bounty, are well calculated to excite alarm, his promises are infinitely consoling to those who make a good use of the talents which have been intrusted to their care. The reward of the rich, who faithfully discharge their duty, will be munificent beyond conception, and be proportioned to the difficulties under which they labor, from their very elevation of rank, in the habitual practice of virtue.”

"Cannot rich people," asked Maria, "do good in any other way, than by merely giving money?"—"Undoubtedly they can, my love," replied Sir James. "The mere giving of money affords but a temporary mitigation of distress, leaving the sufferer still uncertain of to-morrow's fare. It also, on some occasions, tends to encourage idleness. The most effectual method of relieving the poor is to place in their hands the means of providing for themselves, and of subsisting on the fruits of their own industry. Thus, a gentleman of landed property not only advances his interest, and that of his heirs, but is a benefactor to the commonwealth, by the employment of the poor in improving and beautifying his estate, draining marshes, levelling hilly roads, cutting and planting timber, building, and the like."

"But, papa," exclaimed Frances, "there is no charity in all this, because you derive either pleasure or profit from the money which you expend."—"You are wrong, my love," continued Sir James. "If I undertake works of this description, I benefit the poor man, by enabling him to support himself by his labor; the condition allotted to him by divine Providence. I am also the means of preserving him from occasions of vice, to which idleness generally leads, and I prevent his becoming a burthen to his parish. Thus I confer an advantage on the community at large, and am engaged in the performance of deeds, which may be classed high among moral and public virtues. But, if I commence such works with a view to please God, and to promote the welfare of my neighbor for his sake, and am obliged, in order to accomplish them, to refrain from expensive pleasures, and live with economy; then I perform an act of charity meritorious in the sight of the Almighty, and which will ensure me, in his heavenly kingdom, a great and permanent reward."

"Ladies, also, my dear girls, may do much good, little individual expense," said Lady Alton, "by forming associations among themselves, and contributing a trifle every month, towards the purchase of clothing for the poor, and in order to allow the aged and infirm two or three shillings a week. Those, too, who are reduced by misfortune to a state of penury, and are unwilling to apply to their parish for support, should be the objects of our bounty, in preference to those, whose condition in life renders them



objects of public care. Our relief, also, ought to bear some proportion to the rank which the sufferers formerly held, and should not be granted to all indiscriminately."

"I am sorry to interrupt the conversation, mamma," said Frances, "but I am extremely thirsty, and perhaps at the little cottage which I see peeping through the trees, I shall be able to get a glass of water. Will you allow me to go and ask for some?"—"Most willingly," replied Lady Alton, "if you cannot restrain your impatience till our return home."

"I think you will be disappointed, Frances," said Sir James; "for I passed this way about a fortnight since, when the cottage was uninhabited; nor does it, indeed, appear tenantable, for the casements are broken, and part of the roof has fallen in. However, we will walk to it."

The young ladies, preceding their parents, quickly turned into the path which led to the cottage, but did not find it empty, as they had been induced to anticipate. A little girl of sickly aspect, with a young child in her arms, was standing at the door. She appeared about twelve years of age; and the clothes, which scarcely sufficed to cover her, bore witness to her poverty. Frances eagerly asked for water. "I will fetch you some, miss," said the girl in a pleasing tone of voice; "but I fear we have nothing fit for you to drink out of. Oh, here is my brother! Charley, dear, go and get some water for these ladies." On his return, she presented it to Frances, saying, "This mug is clean, miss, though very shabby, and the water is excellent." Frances, who was thirsty, took a copious draught; and, on laying down the mug, observed, that she considered water very refreshing drink, and that such as got plenty of it had no right to complain.—"Provided they have a sufficiency of nourishing food," interrupted Maria, "water is a wholesome beverage; but when that is not the case, I should scarcely suppose it to be of a very strengthening quality."

"My poor mother," said the girl, with a sigh, "does not find much support from it, for she has a baby to nurse; but we cannot get any thing better, and so must be content."

Frances having allayed her thirst, and merely expressed her thanks for the accommodation, was going away; but Maria, more thoughtful, took out her purse and presented the girl with a shilling, saying, "Your appearance denotes poverty; I beg, therefore, you will accept this trifle." The

girl took the money, but returned it immediately, on discovering it to be a shilling, stating, that her mother would be displeased if she received so large a sum for a little water, which cost nothing; "but if you have a few halfpence, ladies, I shall be very thankful."—"I will not take back what I have given," replied Maria; "you have a mother it seems—"—"Yes, miss, my parents are here; my father is going to his parish, but being taken ill on the road two days ago, and finding this empty cottage, we are obliged to stay here till he gets better. We have not any physic for him; nor should we have had any food but for your charity. I am sure we owe you a thousand thanks. God is very good, thus to help us when we least expected it; for this place is so lonely, I did not suppose any one would walk here. Good bye, miss; may you never know what it is to want! I will go now and buy some bread before it is quite dark." Saying this, she gave the baby to her brother, and was out of sight in a moment. During this conversation, Frances felt in her purse for something to add to her sister's gift, but had the mortification to find it empty; and remembered with regret, that a few days before, she had parted with its contents for some useless trifle. As soon as the interesting stranger was gone, the young ladies returned in haste to their parents, who had slowly followed them, and, with tears in their eyes, related what had passed, requesting permission to enter the house and administer further relief. To this Sir James objected, remarking it was too late, as they would be exposed to the heavy dew which was already beginning to fall. He, therefore, advised them to proceed to the Park with their mamma, while he made inquiry respecting the inmates of the ruinous cottage.

This decision neither Frances nor Maria ventured to oppose, though it was contrary to their wishes, because they felt pleasure in obeying the slightest intimation of their father's will, convinced that he never denied them any thing, without having a sufficient reason for the refusal. Sir James did not overtake his companions till they had reached the Hall: it was then past nine o'clock, and time for the young ladies to withdraw. Their eager inquiries, therefore, were only answered by Sir James with an affectionate "good night," and a promise that, on the morrow, their benevolent curiosity should be gratified. He added

that, in the mean while, they might indulge the pleasing reflection, that their walk had been productive of good to others; and he expressed his confidence, that it would not ultimately be without advantage to themselves.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

"My dear mamma," exclaimed Teresa, "I am glad to see you come in so soon; Maria said you would tell us about the distressed family you met with yesterday. I have half-a-crown; may I give it to them?"

"I thought, Teresa," interrupted Jane, "you reserved that money to purchase for your doll the pretty bonnet we saw at Mrs. Perrin's."—"So I did," replied Teresa; "but when Maria was relating at breakfast the distress of the poor sick travellers, I resolved that they should have my money. The doll, you know, can do without a bonnet; but these people may die if they cannot get food. May I give them my half-crown, mamma?"—"Certainly, my love; and it affords me great pleasure to see you so willing to contribute to the wants of others, at the expense of your own gratification. Your papa has relieved their immediate necessities, as far as regards food and medicine, but they are destitute of apparel. Your money, therefore, with the help of your needle, may assist in clothing them, and thus your charity will afford effectual and permanent relief."

"But half-a-crown will not buy many things, mamma," judiciously observed Teresa; "Frances gave more than that for her last new sash."—"By itself it will not go very far," said Lady Alton; "but as your sisters will, no doubt, follow the good example you have set them, our united contributions may amount to a sum sufficient for our purpose, and, when I have told their little history, you shall be the collector."—"Thank you, mamma," rejoined Teresa: "pray begin, we are all impatience." Lady Alton then commenced as follows:—

"I proceeded this morning to visit the forlorn travellers, who interested us so much last night. The poor man, who appears very weak, was lying in the corner of the room on a little straw, scarcely sufficient to cover the space he oc-

cupied: The girl who presented you with the water was endeavoring to persuade him to take some broth which I had sent to the cottage. His wife, who looks respectable, even in rags, and seems to be a model of patience and resignation, in the midst of the most afflicting poverty, was sitting on a broken bench (the only article of furniture this desolate abode contained), and was nursing a half-starved baby, ten months old. She arose as I entered, and displaying a countenance indicative of ill health and deep anxiety of mind, apologized for having no better seat to offer me.

“ ‘I am sorry, my good woman,’ I said, ‘to find you and your family in such distress, but I hope you will soon be better off.’—‘Ah, madam,’ she answered, ‘God’s will be done. He is infinitely merciful! You are, I presume, the lady to whom we are already so greatly indebted. To your prompt assistance, my dear husband, the father of my children, owes his life; had he remained a few hours longer without medicine, he must have died. My poor children, too, were perishing for want of food. Ah! how much do we owe, likewise, to the hand of Providence, which conducted your steps towards this solitary hovel, and induced your dear young ladies to apply for water. Oh, my God!’ said she, clasping her hands, ‘why did I, for one moment, doubt thy paternal care? Thou hast tried us, indeed, severely, but thou hast not abandoned us. Thy will be done; thy holy name be blessed for ever!’

“ Struck with this apparent resignation, in misery so overwhelming, I pretended to doubt whether she spoke as she felt.—‘Ah, madam,’ she resumed, ‘you doubt whether I utter the sentiments of my heart; but be assured that I do. What would have become of me amidst all the wretchedness I have endured, had not the Almighty supported me with his grace, and enabled me to look on all my troubles as the effects of his holy will? But, alas! I am far from suffering so patiently as I ought; and when I saw my dear husband and children without the necessities of life, my confidence began to give way, and I was seized with the most agonizing apprehensions. But our good God, in whose aid I still trusted, has not abandoned us; he has sent succor when we least expected it, and my reliance has not been vain. If your ladyship can afford us a little assistance till we reach Bradford, I hope we shall there be

able to get work ; for we prefer the bread of industry, however hardly earned, to that of idleness or dependence.'

"I inquired what object they had in view, when they should reach the village which she had named.—'We have indulged the hope,' she answered, 'of obtaining employment in that neighborhood, because I have an uncle who is a farmer there. I fear, however, that my dear Charles will be long before he recovers sufficient strength to work at his trade.'—Here the good woman, casting a look of affectionate anxiety towards her husband, burst into tears. 'Dry your tears, Kate,' said he ; 'the doctor's medicine, and this charitable lady's food, have already done me much good, and who knows but, with God's blessing, we may yet be able to live without going to the work-house ; if not, I must endeavor to profit by the lesson you have been so long trying to teach me—resignation to the will of God.'—'An excellent lesson, my good friend,' said I, 'and well worthy of your attention. Be assured, that nothing happens without the permission of the Almighty, whose eye is ever upon us. He delights not in our sufferings ; and when he punishes, it is in mercy he directs the blow, lest, sparing us here, he should be obliged to condemn us hereafter. Submit, then, with patience, to the miseries you endure ; abandon yourself to the unerring providence of God, and you will receive in heaven an abundant reward.'

"'Madam,' he answered, 'I will endeavor to bear patiently the evil I cannot remove. My greatest affliction is, that I have, by my own misconduct, brought this trouble on my wife and children ; but I hope I shall live to prove, by my future conduct, that I am quite reformed.'—'You have been long reformed,' said his wife, 'and the consequences of your errors you cannot now prevent. Strive, therefore, to forget the past ; and should Divine Providence restore your strength, and enable you to find employment, we shall yet do very well. Two of our children are old enough to earn something towards their maintenance, as soon as we are settled.' I then inquired what business they were of, and learned that the man is a carpenter, and his wife a dressmaker."

"Did you ask," interrupted Maria, "by what means they were reduced to this abject poverty?"—"I did, my dear, and will relate the cause."—"Oh, pray do, mamma,"

said Frances ; “ and I dare say we shall hear that it was the result of their own folly ; for I believe people often become poor through misconduct, and then, truly, the rich are called upon to relieve them.”

“ Frances,” interrupted Miss Hargrave, “ must I be continually obliged to reprove you for your unfortunate disposition to prejudice your neighbor, and for always putting the worst construction on his actions ? For what end is abundance bestowed on the wealthy, if not to assist those who are in need ? Wait till you have heard their history, before you prejudice yourself against them ; and even should it appear that their misfortunes are the consequence of indiscretion, their present misery entitles them to relief. You can contribute nothing, because, when we make our little collection, you will be obliged to acknowledge that your purse is empty. It too frequently happens, that those who from extravagance are unable, or who from selfishness refuse, to succor the unfortunate, attempt to justify their want of charity by hastily concluding, that all who apply to them are impostors, or objects otherwise unworthy of compassion. Had your amiable parénts acted from such considerations, how many of the respectable and useful poor who now surround you, might, for want of timely and prudent assistance, have turned out profligate and abandoned characters, not at first from principle, but because driven, by extreme necessity, to the very brink of despair.”

“ This,” said Maria, “ may be the case with these unfortunate people, if we do not relieve their wants. I am sure it will afford us great pleasure to make them some comfortable clothing, and papa will, I dare say, advance money to buy furniture, as soon as they are able to continue their journey. Now, mamma, if you please, tell us all you know about them.”

“ Charles Clayton and his wife contended who should relate the circumstances that had reduced them to their present distress. I settled their harmless dispute, by requesting Mrs. Clayton to perform that task, as, in the weak state of her husband’s health, it would be too great an exertion for him. She then gave me the following account :—

“ ‘ My father was a small farmer, with a numerous family, of which I was the eldest. I was taught to read and write, and, when twelve years old, was taken by my god-mother (a respectable lady, who kept me to wait on her),

till I was sixteen, when she kindly articted me to a dress-maker, that I might be able to provide for myself. Soon after I was out of my time, I married, with the approbation of my parents and godmother, Charles Clayton, a journeyman carpenter, a young man of good character, and very industrious. My husband's business being finished in the neighborhood in which we married, we settled at Manchester, and lived there very happily for five years. His labor and mine amply supplied all our wants; and as neither was extravagant, our economy enabled us to save a little. Our increasing family increased our cares; but content with our humble station, and doing our best to live in a Christian manner, we enjoyed more real happiness than usually falls to the lot of mortals.

“ ‘About this time, my kind godmother died, and left us two hundred pounds; but this money, instead of being a blessing, as we ought to have made it, was the source of all our present misery. It was no sooner rumored, that Clayton had a legacy, than several of his acquaintance persuaded him to commence business for himself. To this I did not object; but he was prevailed on, much against my wish, to enter into partnership with a man who had a very good trade, but who was of too gay a turn of mind to pay much attention to it. To such a person, a steady man, with some money, was likely to be a great advantage, and no means were left untried to induce him to join in the concern. The prospect was certainly favorable; but I strongly opposed the plan, because I knew Bilcot to be an immoral character, and, as “evil communication corrupts good manners,” I was fearful lest my dear Charles should be led away, by the influence of his bad example.

“ ‘Alas! my forebodings were but too soon realized; for that worthless man was never easy, till he had corrupted the best of husbands and of fathers. Four years I led a life of continual suffering, both of mind and body; but, taking St. Monica for my guide, I forebore, in imitation of her, to reproach my husband with his ill-treatment, or complain of it to others. I was always in hopes, that if I bore it patiently, the Almighty would hear my prayers, and grant him grace to discover his error, before it was too late to save himself and his property from entire ruin. Unaccustomed to excess, he was occasionally visited with severe fits of illness. Whilst he was suffering from these,

he promised to reform ; but returning health restored him to his former dissolute companions, and he fell again into his usual habits. It needed the severest strokes of Divine Providence to effect his conversion. When business, madam, is not attended to, it soon falls off. In about five years, our little property was dissipated ; and arrest followed arrest, till at length the irritated creditors seized all we had, and left us beggars.

“ ‘ My husband now began to open his eyes to his past folly ; he saw his children on the point of starving around him, and bitterly accused himself as the author of our wretchedness. I said what I could to comfort him ; entreated him to look on this trial as coming from the hands of God, representing that he, no doubt, had merciful designs in making use of this apparent severity, which was intended, perhaps, as the means of bringing him back to his former virtuous habits, and thereby securing the salvation of his soul. I at length succeeded in calming his mind, and prevailed on him to seek comfort from God by repentance, and a sincere return to those religious duties which he had so long neglected.

“ ‘ Our charitable neighbors took compassion on us, raised us a few pounds to furnish a room, and persuaded a respectable carpenter to employ my husband as a journeyman. I was supplied with abundance of work, and we began again to enjoy a little comfort, when a destructive fire broke out in the house in which we resided, and we had only time to save our lives ; our little furniture was all destroyed, and we were again destitute. As there were many other sufferers besides ourselves, we could obtain by subscription only thirty shillings : this sum, after paying a few small debts, was reduced to nine. Unwilling to become a burthen to the parish, we proposed going to the master with whom my husband served his apprenticeship, and who lives in the neighborhood of my uncle, thinking that, between them, they might be able to find us some occupation. We had been two days on the road, when poor Charles was taken ill. We then went to a public house, and were obliged to pass three nights there, before he was able to travel any farther. This diminished our little stock considerably ; and when, two days ago, we reached this desolate cottage, to which Divine Providence directed your charitable steps, we had but sixpence remain



ing. 'This, madam, is our short, but eventful history. If you will further assist us to reach Bradford, I hope, as it is the summer season, we shall not be long without work.'

"I asked her, if she had considered what they were to do with regard to clothes and furniture. 'Alas! no, madam,' she replied; 'the destitute can calculate but little. We have brought this distress on ourselves, and must submit patiently to the inconvenience of it.'

" 'Do not say *we*, Kate,' interrupted the husband, who had hitherto been silent. 'I alone am guilty, and would it were possible that I alone could bear the punishment. It grieves me, more than I can express, to see you and our dear children suffer from my misconduct. But your confidence in a still merciful Providence inspires me to hope, that it will direct some benevolent hand to our support, when we are beyond the reach of this good lady's generosity.'

"The two elder children then approached me, and asked, in an engaging manner, if I could give them employment, that they might earn money to help their parents. I inquired what they were able to do. Martha answered, 'that she could work well with her needle; and that her brother, who was ten years old, could work in the garden, because he knew weeds from flowers, and she was sure he would not be idle.' I promised to reflect on the matter; and after cheering them with the hope of brighter days, I took my leave. This, my dear girls, is the history of these unfortunate strangers. Now what can you do for their relief?"

"We will work for them, mamma," replied Maria, in the name of all; "and if we may go immediately to lay out the money we are able to contribute, the clothes can be begun this evening."

"Most willingly, my dear," said her ladyship; "the sooner the business is undertaken, the better; and, with the permission of your governess, I think we must have the little girl every afternoon, during this week, to help you, for which you can pay her sixpence a day."

Lady Alton could well have afforded to purchase the articles ready made, or to place them out to be prepared by others. But, as she was anxious to establish in her children habits of industry, and accustom them to the practice of that economy which has justice or charity for

its object, she thought it more advisable to indulge their eagerness, and allow them the gratification which they would naturally feel, when they beheld the poor woman and her children comfortably clothed, in articles that had been bought with their own money, and prepared by the labor of their own hands. As the young ladies worked very diligently during their leisure hours, and rose considerably earlier in the morning than usual (for they were not suffered to omit their daily lessons), by the end of a week, almost every article of necessary clothing was completed.

"What a delightful week we have spent," said Frances; "it has not seemed longer to me than two days frequently appear. I never was fond of work, and did not think it could have afforded me so much pleasure. I am sorry our engagement is nearly at an end."

"You will always find, my dear Frances," said Miss Hargrave, "that meritorious actions produce their reward. You have been very industrious; the end you had in view was worthy of your exertions, and the time is passed away pleasantly and imperceptibly. To-morrow, you will have the satisfaction of seeing the objects of your mutual solicitude comfortably and decently clothed; you will receive their grateful acknowledgments; and the pleasure resulting from the consideration of the good you have effected, will amply compensate your labors."

"What can be done, mamma," asked Frances, "towards procuring them some furniture? They looked very miserable yesterday in that desolate room, with nothing but straw to lie on, and scarcely a pane of glass in the window. It is fortunate the weather is so warm and dry. I now perceive how grateful *we* ought to be to God for the comforts we enjoy. I will make a resolution not to repine any more at the trifling inconveniences I occasionally meet with."

"I have been thinking," said Maria, "that these nice clothes will be spoiled in that dirty room. Do you conceive that papa would object to keep the Claytons in our neighborhood, and establish them in the little cottage where old Giles and his daughter lived? We inquired about it yesterday, and learned that it is unoccupied; the rent is only six pounds a year. It consists of four rooms and a pretty garden."

"But, my dears, if your papa were to comply with your wish, have you considered how the rent is to be discharged? These people are so poor and destitute, that their labor will do little more than suffice for their maintenance, and enable them to purchase, by degrees, a few articles of furniture. To pay a rent of six pounds, however hard they may work, must be, I fear, impracticable; and Sir James is not willing to let his cottages to such as cannot pay for them. He must be prudent as well as charitable."

"I have taken a great liking to these poor people," said Frances, "and should be sorry to lose sight of them. It was my choice of the walk, and my impatience for a draught of water, that led to their discovery. Mrs. Clayton's resignation will teach me a lesson of forbearance; and the mortification I experienced in not having any money to contribute to their relief, will stimulate me to the practice of economy. We have formed a little plan among ourselves, which, if papa accedes to it, will cause us great pleasure."

"May I be made acquainted with this plan?" inquired Lady Alton, gratified by the benevolent dispositions of her children, and particularly with Frances, whose daily improvement afforded her much consolation. "Oh, certainly, mamma," answered Maria; "we can withhold no secrets from you. It was only this morning that we arranged our plan, which is, to request papa to let these poor people occupy Giles's cottage, and permit us to furnish the rent, for one year, out of our pocket-money. After that time, if they are industrious and steady, they will be able, I should think, to pay it themselves. Papa, you know, allows us two pounds a quarter, and from that sum we can very well spare ten shillings; so that, between Jane, Frances and me, the rent will be easily made up. Do you object to our proposal, mamma?"

"No, my dear children; how can I possibly do so? But as I cannot decide in favor of it, without the approbation of Sir James, it will be better to send for him. Go, Teresa, and tell papa I wish to speak to him." Teresa readily obeyed; and Sir James, surprised at the unexpected summons, immediately attended.

On his entrance into the apartment, he was surrounded by his children, who, all at the same moment, with the

eagerness natural to youth, assailed him with, "Papa, we are going to ask a favor of you—do grant it—indeed, you must not refuse—promise to comply with our request."

"It is not prudent to make promises," replied the delighted father, already disposed to concede whatever they should demand, "before we know the nature of the request, lest we should not be able conscientiously to fulfil them. Explain your wishes, and be assured that I will either yield to them at once, or endeavor to give you sufficient reason, why it would not be proper to consent to your proposal."

Frances then quickly described to her father their plan for the relief of the Claytons, and expressed a hope, that he would oblige them, unless he had heard any thing disadvantageous to the character of the strangers. Sir James considered a moment, while the young ladies waited with eager expectation for his answer. "My dear children," said he, embracing them, "your request does you too much honor to permit the least hesitation in the grant of it. Suffer me, however, to inquire, whether you have well considered the responsibility you take upon yourselves, and whether you think the charitable dispositions which you have evinced towards these unfortunate persons, in the moment of their greatest distress, will continue when the excitement is past, and you see them in comparative independence. Our charity frequently endures no longer, than while we behold the objects of it in extreme misery. When their prospects brighten a little, we are too apt to withdraw our hand, and leave them to relapse into their former wretchedness."

"Oh! papa, do not be afraid of that," interrupted Maria; "we shall contemplate in these poor people our own work, and, seeing them in improving circumstances, shall feel encouraged to continue our assistance, till they are placed beyond the probability of want."—"I can rely on you, Maria, and on Jane," returned Sir James, "but I am fearful lest my dear Frances, who is not so economical, should be tempted, by some pretty toy or useless ornament, to forget her engagement. And though, my love," continued he, tenderly taking her by the hand, "ten shillings may appear a trifle to you, when desirous to spend it for your gratification, it will appear a large sum for these people to make up, if you neglect to fulfil your promise."

"But you will have the money in hand, papa," said Frances, "and can pay yourself by giving us ten shillings less every quarter."—"No, my love, I will not agree to that," replied her father; "my steward will collect Clayton's rent, and look to him for it. You must, therefore, if I consent to your proposal, have all the merit of this good action yourselves, and save money against the time appointed. Weigh well, then, the consequences of what you contemplate, before you make any engagements; for, when once you have become responsible, it will be cruel to retract, as you would thus expose this family to a renewal of those miseries, from which you are now so solicitous to free them."

"Indeed, papa, you may rely on me," said Frances. "I am sure I shall not repent of what I am doing, though it may oblige me to resist the temptation which I usually feel, to purchase every pretty thing that strikes my fancy. I wish to show you, that I have profited by your good advice."—"Well, my dear children," returned Sir James, "I take you at your word; these poor people shall, at your request, be placed in the cottage, and I will endeavor to find employment for Clayton, as soon as he is able to work. But of what great advantage will a house be without furniture? you have made no provision for that"—"Yes, papa, we have," said the children, their eyes beaming with delight; "we have not forgotten, but it depends on you and mamma to assist us. The lumber-room"—

"Oh! I understand you; you want permission to rummage the lumber-room: well, I believe I must consent," said their indulgent father; "but are there no superfluities that you can part with yourselves? That benevolence which requires no sacrifice from self-love, has comparatively but little merit."

"Indeed, sir," interrupted Miss Hargrave, "I must do justice to the intention of my charming pupils, for it was chiefly at their own expense, and by depriving themselves of comforts to which they are accustomed, that they proposed to furnish the cottage. Frances and Jane offered to give a mattress and a blanket. Maria, conceiving that a soft bed would be more suitable for Mrs. Clayton, wishes to resign hers. Though I admired the project, I dissuaded them from persisting in it, lest it should not meet with your approbation."

"They have my free consent," replied Sir James; "I even approve of their plan. I think it necessary, however, to assure them, that no article of which they deprive themselves, will be replaced for at least a twelvemonth; so that it behoves them to reflect, before they form their resolution, in order that they may not afterwards repent of their charity. And now," turning to his daughters, "if you are not afraid of dirtying your fingers, or spoiling your dress, come with me to my treasury, and see what it contains."

The ladies did not require a second invitation, but accompanied their benevolent father with eager steps, and in a short time selected a variety of worn, but still useful articles. "I have often wondered, papa," said Frances, "why you were so careful of old things, which I thought were only fit to be thrown away, or broken up and burnt. It certainly appeared to me very miserly and ridiculous."—"And to others, also, no doubt, my dear," answered Sir James; "but what is your opinion now?"

"Oh, papa," said Frances, "that which I used to consider folly, appears to-day in a very different light. I at length perceive the advantage of economy, even in the most trivial things; for it will now enable us to furnish poor Clayton's house with many useful articles, which, but for your care, would have been long since destroyed. If ever I am mistress of a house, I will certainly have a lumber-room."

"You will do well, as it will often supply you with the means of assisting others, without impoverishing yourself. The things you have selected here are old and shabby, but they are still fit for use. Articles which are with propriety rejected by the opulent, as no longer adapted to their service, the indigent will always receive with gratitude, as highly conducive to their comfort. Nothing, therefore, should be thrown away, because a time will arrive, as in the present instance, when it may become eminently useful to some less fortunate fellow creature."—"I cannot find any curtains for these old bedsteads, papa," exclaimed Maria; "what must be done?"

"This," said Sir James, "is a luxury they can very well dispense with, till they endeavor to obtain it by their own exertions. While we present them with every thing absolutely necessary to their comfort, we must be careful not

to do too much, lest we deprive them of proper excitements to industry and economy. These people will be clothed, their cottage furnished, and their rent paid for a year. If you leave them nothing to desire, or feel the want of, they will have little inclination to labor; or the fruits of their industry will be expended in luxurious living, which will only engender disease and bad habits."

The next day being Saturday, the young ladies were anxious, that the poor family should be removed from their present miserable abode, in order that they might not be obliged to pass another Sunday there. They had, accordingly, the satisfaction, in the course of the evening, of seeing them decently dressed, and comfortably settled in their new habitation, and of receiving their benedictions and reiterated thanks. Frances, for the first time in her life, felt how much superior is the pleasure arising from the performance of virtuous actions, to that which results from selfish gratification; and as she contemplated with delight the good which a little exertion, on the part of herself and sisters, had enabled them to accomplish, she resolved never again to be wantonly extravagant, or to turn away her ear from the petitions of the distressed.

The care of the apothecary, and the nourishing food with which he was supplied, enabled Clayton, in a fortnight after his removal to the cottage, to go out to work, and support his wife and children. His leisure hours were employed in cultivating his garden or improving the conveniences of his house. Having been severely tried by misfortunes, and removed from bad connections, he no more returned to his evil habits, but led, as formerly, a Christian life. He daily blessed the mercy of God, who, through the path of affliction, had snatched his soul from the danger of everlasting ruin. The eldest boy and girl were placed in the charity-schools, where they soon distinguished themselves by diligent application, obedience and orderly conduct. These worthy people became a pattern to the neighborhood; Sir James never had reason to regret his liberality, while his amiable children often congratulated themselves on the sacrifices they had made for their relief.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

"YOUR lordship is fond of an early ramble, I perceive," said Sir James Alton, addressing Lord Harcourt, on his entrance into the breakfast-room.—"I am, my good friend," answered his lordship, "and particularly in so enchanting a place. I have been out these two hours, and it was with reluctance that I obeyed the admonition of my watch, though I was anxious to congratulate you on the improvements you have made. I passed through this neighborhood seven years ago, when every thing around bore marks of desolation and neglect. To-day, each object presents a smiling aspect, which fixes and enchants the eye. The varied prospect, the well-cultivated fields, and, above all, the number and neatness of the cottages, at once surprise and delight me. How have you managed to compass so much in so short a time? It is but five years since you came to the estate."

"It is seven," returned Sir James, "since the improvements you so much admire, were commenced; for they were projected by the late baronet, with a view to repair his former negligence. He had, however, merely sufficient leisure to sketch the plan and collect materials, when Providence called him hence; and I have experienced great pleasure in endeavoring to perfect the good he meditated. Much still remains to be done, but it requires time."

"And money, too," interrupted his lordship; "I should conceive the cottages alone, with their well-stocked gardens, do not cost you a trifle."—"I have forty cottages, and they are maintained in the order you observe, for about twenty pounds a year; an insignificant sum, considering the gratification we derive from seeing our people comfortably lodged, and from contemplating the benefit that results to them from inspiring habits of neatness and industry."

"You are more fortunate," said his lordship, "than most other landlords, in meeting with tenants so ready to comply with your wishes; for my own part, I can never find any so well disposed. For one family that is solicitous to have things clean and comfortable, I am plagued with half a dozen that are perfectly indifferent: the wife



is too lazy to keep her dwelling in order ; and the husband, when his day's work is finished, prefers a public house to his garden. Thus, the poor become poorer, and more miserable ; while the gentleman, on whose estate they reside, has either the mortification of seeing nothing but misery around him, to which by degrees he becomes callous ; or he is at an enormous expense in clothing the inhabitants, and in adorning the cottages of a class of people, who care nothing for his love of neatness, and who scarcely thank him for all his liberality. Here every object proclaims contentment and regularity ; every countenance is dressed in smiles. I entered several cottages of the laborers, and was rejoiced to discover, that the interior corresponded exactly to the appearance without. The men had breakfasted and gone to their labor, the busy children were eagerly preparing for school, and the neatness of their coarse but clean apparel manifested the industry of the mother. I inquired who was their landlord, and they replied, ' Sir James Alton,' calling down a thousand blessings on his head. How happy are you, my dear sir, thus to live in the hearts of those who surround you ! My astonishment, also, was greatly excited, when I was informed that the gardens were chiefly cultivated by children. Explain, I entreat, the method you have adopted to concentrate in your neighborhood a new class of beings, different from the rest of mankind. I have traversed nearly all England, and have beheld many beautiful parks and mansions ; I have visited places in which the poor have been employed and cherished ; but no where have I found a peasantry whose comforts have been so much consulted, and who have been so wisely taught to appreciate the blessings they enjoy."

" When I succeeded to this estate," said Sir James, " I found the laboring poor as they are generally met with—idle, improvident, and, too many of them, immoral. I applied myself, as soon as possible, to remedy this evil, and concluded that the most expeditious means of reclaiming them would be, to make it their interest to be industrious, economical and virtuous. In this attempt I have been ably seconded by Lady Alton, Mr. Morini and Joseph Berry ; and the success of our exertions convinces me, more and more, of the benefit which society would experience, if gentlemen who live on their estates would take

an interest in the welfare, and contribute to the comforts, of those who depend on them for bread. They ought wholly to withdraw their countenance from such as would not endeavor to amend their conduct; and banish the wicked and disorderly, as far as possible, from their domain."

"Your observations are just," interrupted his lordship. "Acquaint me now, more minutely, with the details of the plan which you pursued to remodel your little colony."

"In the first instance, I repaired my old cottages thoroughly, built many new ones, and placed in them whatever was thought necessary for the convenience of the inhabitants; such as an oven to bake their bread, and a copper for the purposes of brewing and washing. I also attached to each house a piece of ground, more than sufficient for a supply of vegetables. While this work was in hand, I summoned my people, and explained the conditions on which I would receive them as tenants. The rents not being more than from four to eight pounds, according to the size of the tenements, all were eager to engage my cottages, and promised to adhere strictly to my regulations. Well aware that bad habits are not easily broken, and the contrary virtues implanted, I allowed them one year for trial; and if, during that period, they did not follow my advice, by becoming sober, industrious and peaceable, I dismissed them from my service, and obliged them to quit my houses. One of my covenants is, that they shall whitewash the exterior of the cottage every spring. For this purpose, I sell them lime at a reduced price; and, by way of encouragement, make them a present, when the work is completed, of five shillings. As a stimulus to industry and cleanliness, in the interior of the house, I present the wife with half a crown, for whitening or coloring the walls of this or that room, as occasion may require.

"Convinced, as I am, that indolence and want of cleanliness among the poor, engender disease and misery, and that too much leisure is inimical to good morals, I have made it my business to encourage a love of employment, and, by small rewards, have succeeded beyond my expectation."

"But how," rejoined Lord Harcourt, "do your laborers find time to keep their gardens in such good order, and to have them so well cropped? Between fruit, flowers and vegetables, there is not an inch of ground unoccupied."

"The gardens, as your lordship has been informed, are principally cultivated by the children, and you would be surprised to observe the ardor with which they apply to their work. All their leisure moments are spent in the garden, and scarcely an idle child is to be seen in the neighborhood. My head gardener, who has kindly entered into all my views, goes round, about once a month, to our young horticulturists, minutes down in a book the names of those who deserve praise, gives them some general instructions, and makes his public report once a year. For the first two years, I was obliged to accommodate them with seed; but since that time they have learned to save sufficient for their wants, and I am rarely applied to. They are furnished, from my nursery ground, with such trees as they cannot rear."

"But are you not of opinion, my dear sir," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "that the girls, to whose care, I understand, the flower department is committed, would be better employed in the house? They must, of course, be brought up for common servants; and this gardening will, I fear, engross so much of their time, as to leave them ignorant of those domestic concerns which more immediately come within their sphere."

"We have considered, my dear lady, that recreation, air and exercise are necessary for young persons of both sexes, to strengthen the body, invigorate the mind, and fit them for those laborious employments which usually fall to their lot. Health, which is, in all circumstances, one of Heaven's choicest blessings, is of peculiar importance to the poor, and we must do our utmost to preserve it to them. Gardening is a healthful exercise—the cultivation of flowers an innocent amusement. It is for these reasons that we encourage a love of it in the girls; but it is only the time intended for recreation, that which may be stolen from sleep, or such as would otherwise be unprofitably spent, that they are allowed to devote to this object."

"It fills me with amazement," resumed Lord Harcourt, "that children, naturally indolent, and ever in search of variety, can be induced to continue their labors with so much perseverance, as to produce in their gardens the plenty and the neatness I so much admire; and some of them are really laid out with excellent taste."

"Emulation and the prospect of recompense, my lord,

act as a powerful stimulant in young minds ; and when they are thus animated with a laudable desire to excel, there is no danger that the work will remain stationary. These children have not many hours at their own disposal, and, consequently, they do not tire. The days appear too short to enable them to effect all they propose, and their ambition to produce a few early vegetables and flowers, to sell at the next market-town, inspires them every year with fresh ardor."

"Were I in want of an assistant," said Lady Harcourt, rather ironically, "I should be afraid of applying to your neighborhood, Sir James, lest the little maiden should neglect my domestic business, to usurp the office of the gardener, or, having had so many comforts at home, should pine after the calm delights of her native village, and, for some trifling reproof, suddenly quit my service."

"Our little maidens, madam," replied Sir James, "are sought after with so much earnestness, that there is no danger of your ladyship's being troubled with one. They are well instructed in their duty, and are seldom complained of by their employers. In the capacity of servants, they have reward again held out to them as an incitement to exertion. If they can produce a good character at the end of their first year's service, they receive twenty shillings, and a well-bound prayer-book inscribed with their name. The money is invested in the Savings' Bank. If they continue in the same situation, they entitle themselves, every year, to the same present in money (which is deposited as before) and an instructive book."

"How long," interrupted Lord Harcourt, "do you continue thus to reward their good conduct?"—"Till they have attained the age of twenty-one. At that period, considering them sufficiently established in good habits, and deserving higher wages than they have previously obtained, they are left to themselves. They are not, however, abandoned ; for I promise to double, on the day of their marriage, whatever sum they may have saved from wages, not exceeding five pounds a year, provided they have not forfeited their character."

"But does not this encouragement induce them to marry at too early an age?"—"No, my lord ; because if either party be younger than twenty-one, they are not entitled to any additional provision from my fund, and, in consequence,

they are generally willing to wait till that time. Again, if the parties are discreet, virtuous and industrious, and acquaint me with the projected match, I do all in my power to assist them, by giving ten pounds to provide furniture, and a pig for their winter store."

"There are few gentlemen who find money to do all this, Sir James," observed Lord Harcourt, "how large soever their income may be; but your good example will, I trust, have some imitators, though many will, no doubt, condemn it as ridiculous and eccentric. I have often lamented the miserable and immoral condition of the poor on my estate. I have, over and over again, advanced them money; but it has produced no durable effect. I am now convinced that, to make the poor happy, we must endeavor to make them virtuous, and then they will be contented with their lot, and thankful for our benefits. But, indeed, it must be great slavery to devote so much time as you do to this object; and when I consider your family, as well as the hospitable and elegant manner in which you live, it surprises me that you should be able to spare money for the purpose."

"The Christian religion teaches us, my lord, "that the rich are but stewards to the Almighty, and that their superfluous wealth is designed for the relief of the poor. It is, therefore, our duty to assist those who have been less favored than ourselves with the goods of this world, and endeavor to ameliorate their condition as far as possible; not, indeed, by attempting to make them rich, but by rendering them comfortable and happy in their lowly station. To do this effectually, it is necessary, as you observe, to begin by trying to establish in them virtuous habits, by encouraging industry, and a love of moral rectitude. We must appear interested in their welfare, and thus we shall attach them to our service, and oblige them, as it were, to make an effort to comply with our wishes. The poor, my lord, are apt to imagine themselves neglected and despised by the rich. This feeling renders them indifferent to please their superiors, and only anxious to satisfy, as far as they are able, their uncurbed passions, regardless of the future consequences to either body or soul.

"To stem the torrent of vices which inundated the neighborhood around me, I revolved in my mind various plans, and at length fixed on the one which I have briefly

described. The result has far exceeded my most sanguine anticipations. The pleasure I have derived from the consciousness that I was promoting the glory of God, and the good of my neighbors, by arresting the progress of immorality, has amply repaid any trifling inconveniences I may have undergone. You object, that my method is expensive. To this I answer, that my fortune is ample, and leaves me no excuse for omitting to perform works of charity. We live in a style suitable to our rank, but neither Lady Alton nor myself indulge in extravagance. We, consequently, have at all times a sum of money at our disposal, which can be easily spared without injury to my children. For the support of the schools, and for purposes of reward among my poor tenants, I appropriate £300 a year. As this is more than sufficient for the expenses, I place the surplus in the bank, by way of forming a fund for the future maintenance of the aged poor, should my heirs neglect to contribute to their relief. It is my intention, also, to build a row of neat alms-houses, on a vacant spot of ground near the chapel, where the old and infirm, who have spent their best years in laboring for our service, may find a comfortable asylum, and be preserved from the necessity of retiring to a workhouse."

"May Heaven grant you many years, my dear Sir James!" exclaimed Lord Harcourt, pressing the hand of his friend; "and enable you to accomplish the good you meditate! So shall your name be held in benediction here and hereafter, and your munificence serve as an example to posterity."

"I by no means desire," said the modest Sir James, "that posterity should ever hear of me: the little that I do has its immediate reward in the pleasure it affords me. Our power is generally more extensive than our will. If the useful actions which I perform, by the grace of God, find acceptance in the sight of that Almighty Being, who has commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves, I shall be amply rewarded, and I am not ambitious of the praise of men. We will, if you please, drop the subject."

"Pardon, dear sir," said Lord Harcourt, "expressions of admiration that appear to give you pain—I will not repeat them. The veil which you wish to throw over your good works, tends but to enhance their merit. And, how anxious soever you may be to conceal yourself the changes

you have effected in this neighborhood alone, will prove a lasting monument of your worth. Your excellent plan has not only produced great local improvement, but it has diffused its benefits over every parish in which your estates are situated, by causing a considerable reduction in the poor-rates. The farmers and magistrates earnestly wish that your example should be generally imitated; for they find by experience, that in proportion as religion and morality have been patronized by you, and made the means of securing your favor, petty vices have considerably decreased; and crime no longer dares to rear her head. Your little Teresa was endeavoring to entertain me, yesterday, with an animated description of an approaching fête, which, she says, you give every year to your laborers and their children—may I know the nature and the object of it?”

“If your lordship will oblige me with your company for another week, your presence will add to our festivity, though our rural amusement may not be equally interesting to you. The object of the meeting is to reward my little gardeners, and to encourage them to continue their useful labors. This will be the fourth anniversary. The time usually fixed for it is the first or second week in July, the hay harvest being then generally over, and the corn not quite ready to cut. Our festival, this year, is to be celebrated next Tuesday; and I hope the weather will prove favorable, as the party is in general too large to be accommodated conveniently in the house.”

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE day which had been anticipated for months, and had afforded an unceasing theme of conversation to the peasantry in the neighborhood of Alton Park, at length arrived, and was ushered in by a merry peal from the village church. The morning gave promise of a beautiful day; and every youthful breast was filled with joy. All were busy as the industrious bee; some culling the prettiest flowers, others selecting specimens of their choicest fruit and vegetables. “Whither so fast, pretty Susan?” said

Mr. Daily, the head gardener, to a modest-looking girl, whom he met at an early hour. "I thought you would have found enough to employ you at home this morning: have you no flowers to present to my lady to-day?"—"O yes, sir," she answered with a smile, "I have made up a large nosegay of my nicest flowers, and am now going to old Betty Moseley's, who, you know, is too infirm to do any thing to her garden, poor soul, and so my brother and I have kept it in order for her this last year, and I think you will say it looks very neat. Tom works as hard in it as if it was his own; and old Betty is so pleased!"—"And very grateful, I assure you," replied Daily. "Your charitable labors have not passed unregarded, and to-day you will receive the reward of them. Tell me, now, candidly; is it for the pleasure of obtaining something for poor Betty, or for yourselves, that you have been so diligent?"

"It is for Betty, and for her advantage alone, we have worked; my brother has sold as many things out of her garden as have fetched ten shillings, and there will be a great deal more to sell before the winter. Tom says, he shall be sorry when the old lady dies, because he is so proud of his job; and then she blesses us, and calls us her dear, good children, and that repays us for all our toil. But, if you please, sir, I must be gone, or I shall not be ready to join the procession."

"I will not detain you, my little maid; go, and enjoy the reward of your virtuous conduct. God bless you!"

The delighted girl ran off, with great alacrity, lest she should be too late, and the gardener continued his walk, musing on the happiness of his youthful pupils. He exulted, with honest pride, in the share he always had in contributing to the innocent pleasures of the day. He was fond of his profession, and loved those who displayed any taste for it. As he was perfectly good-natured, the children applied to him without fear, and he took great pains to gratify their thirst for knowledge. Some he commended for extraordinary diligence; others needed reproof; and none escaped the vigilance of his attentive eye. Anxious to participate in the good work that was going forward, and desirous to see the neighborhood of the Park improved and ornamented, he frequently employed his evenings, accompanied by Mr. Berry, in visiting the cottagers, and instructing them and their children in the best



method of rearing such articles as would be most useful. He assisted them in laying out their garden to the greatest advantage, and taught them how to prune and train their trees. By these means, he judiciously seconded the views of his benevolent master, and added much to the comfort of the poor.

About ten o'clock, more than fifty children assembled in the school-room, the place where they were appointed to meet. The boys carried thither, in baskets, selections of fruit and vegetables; and from each basket was suspended a ticket, specifying the name of the owner. The girls arranged their flowers in jugs of water, to which, also, their names were affixed. At half past ten, the procession was on the move. A band of rustic musicians, playing a lively march, led the way. The girls followed, two and two, carrying their flowers; the boys succeeded in the same order, bearing the various products of their cherished gardens. The rear was formed by a number of children of both sexes, each loaded with some instrument of garden tillage, decked with flowers or green boughs, to show that, though they were too young to take the superintendence, they were, nevertheless, able to assist. Health and joy sat on every cheek; clean and neat apparel adorned their comely persons. A loud huzza announced their entrance into the park. "Long live Sir James and Lady Alton!" was echoed from the voices of innumerable spectators. At a quarter before eleven, they reached the house; the great doors were thrown open, the musicians filed off on each side, and the children were received, with smiling countenances, by Sir James and his lady, who, with their family and visitors, were already assembled. The girls, making low courtesies, passed slowly through the hall, and were led round to the chapel, where, having arranged their flowers on each side of the altar, they took their accustomed seats. The boys deposited their baskets in the hall, and then, joining the remainder of the group, who had laid down their tools, the musicians resumed their instruments, and substituting for the lively march notes of sacred harmony, conducted the procession to the chapel. When all had taken their places, the music ceased. As soon as the prayers usually said before mass were ended, the musicians again took up their instruments, and the infant voices of the children, bursting forth simultaneously

in a hymn of jubilation to the Most High, produced an effect more easily conceived than described. A short discourse was then addressed to the children, recommending them to persevere in their virtuous conduct, and pointing out the benefits which would result to them from it, both in this life and the next. They were exhorted to return thanks to God for the blessing he had bestowed on their labors of the preceding year, as manifested by the ample produce of their gardens, and to beg a similar benediction on their future industry. The parents were admonished to impress on the minds of their little ones due sentiments of gratitude to their noble benefactors, who, at all times, took so lively an interest in their comforts and their happiness.

The divine sacrifice was then offered up, and was followed by a short hymn of thanksgiving, sung by the children. This duty being performed, and a few moments devoted to silent recollection, the girls advanced to the altar-rail to receive their jugs of flowers; and then, preceded by the music, the youthful party left the chapel, in the same order in which they had entered it, and returned to the hall.

The vegetables were now examined, and if good, were sent to the kitchen to be dressed; for Sir James honored his young gardeners so much, as to admit to his table, on that day, no other vegetables and common fruits, than those which their gardens yielded. The flowers, if approved of, were accepted to ornament the saloon.

The children, after many encomiums on their industry and orderly conduct, were now dismissed to amuse themselves, for a while, in the park and shrubbery. At one o'clock, the bell summoned them to a plentiful dinner. The tables were arranged under a cluster of spreading oaks, whose leafy branches afforded shelter from the rays of the meridian sun. The upper servants presided; and Sir James and his lady, enjoying the relish with which their little guests partook of the dainty fare, felt pleasure in waiting on and assisting them. After dinner, they were further regaled with an abundance of fruit, which was considered a great luxury; because, though they cultivated it themselves, they indulged in it but sparingly, as it was in general reserved for sale. They now dispersed themselves in groups over the extensive pleasure grounds, and dissi-

pated the swiftly passing hours with a variety of amusing games.

At five o'clock, the welcome bell again called them together, and announced that the prizes were to be distributed. Old and young, parents and children, were now seen moving across the lawn in different directions; for though the ostensible purpose of the festival was only to encourage and recompense the industry of the children, nevertheless, the parents and others were permitted to join them in the afternoon, and it was considered as a holiday throughout the village. A large table was placed on the lawn, where Sir James and his daughters usually took their seats before the bell rang; for they enjoyed the sight of the motley group, which, on its summons, hastened with eager steps from every quarter of the park, each one desiring to be as near as possible to the table. The children were arranged round it, the remainder of the group forming a circle at a respectful distance. Mr. Daily then made his report. This was seldom otherwise than favorable; for the parents now became so interested in the success of their children, feeling sensibly the benefits that accrued to themselves from it, that they did not fail to assist their efforts, and urge them to perseverance.

"It seems, Daily," said Sir James, "that all our young aspirants are deserving of reward. Whom do you recommend first to our notice?"

"I have so many good children," answered the gardener, "that I scarcely know where to begin; but I think Susan Jones, and her brother Tom, stand foremost on the list: for they have contrived to keep old Betty's garden in order as well as their father's, and have honestly turned to profit all they could for her advantage."

"Indeed they have, your honor; blessings on them!" exclaimed a feeble voice from amidst the crowd. It was Betty Moseley herself, who had prevailed on a neighbor to bring her in his cart for the last time; for, as she was very infirm, she said she could not expect to enjoy again so great a pleasure.

"Well, dame," said Sir James, with a smile, "what are you to receive for keeping your garden in such good order? Is it a spade, a rake, or a watering-pot, you wish to have?"

"Ah, good sir, you are joking with me; I am a poor

useless old creature, that can do nothing. Your bounty scarcely leaves me any thing to wish for ; but as infirmities increase, I have felt for some time past, that an arm-chair would be a great comfort ; and these dear children have toiled morning and evening in my garden, to obtain your favor for me."

"I am so much pleased with them, for their disinterested charity," said Sir James, looking kindly on the two children, "that they shall have the gratification of presenting you with a chair, though I should be obliged to take it from my own drawing-room."

"Could it have castors on it ?" said Susan timidly, her face covered with blushes ; "for then poor Betty might easily be pushed to the door to look at her garden."—"It shall, my good girl, and if we can find one this evening, you and your brother shall carry it in triumph to her house."

"Papa," said Maria, "I know there is a nice easy chair in the lumber-room ; may she not have that ?"—"Yes, my love, it will be just the thing ; there are little low wheels on it, which will be more useful even than castors."

"The lumber-room is again serviceable," remarked Frances ; "I shall never find fault with it any more."

"Now, Tom," said Sir James, "tell me what you are in need of, for yourself and your industrious sister. I have only rewarded half your services yet."—"I should like very much to have a new spade, sir, for mine is almost worn out : father says, he has had it many years, and it is not worth mending. I am also in great want of a basket to take our fruit to market ; I have been saving money to buy one, but I have not got enough yet ; it will cost 3s. 6d. But if I have asked too much, I shall be content with what your honor will please to give me."

"You shall have what you ask for, my good lad," replied Sir James ; "your request is not unreasonable. Now, what says Susan ?" Susan, making her best courtesy, ingenuously answered, "I think I am very well paid in what you have given to my brother and Betty Moseley ; because Tom always lends me his tools. But I have been thinking that, if you would please to give me some flower-pots, I should be able to plant in them some double-stocks and mignonette, in the spring, to sell at the market."

"A very good thought, Susan," said Mr. Daily, "and I

wish you success : a dozen of flower-pots, well filled, may fetch you four or five shillings."

"And what will you do with so much money?" asked Lord Harcourt, who had hitherto been a silent but deeply interested spectator. Susan held down her head, and had not courage to speak : but Tom, who was always the champion of this favorite sister, and who was afraid that her silence might be misconstrued, answered, "I will tell you, sir ; she means to reserve part of it to buy more flower-pots, not to be again troublesome to Sir James ; and, with the remainder, to treat father, on Sundays, to something he likes very much, but says he cannot afford. It is—yet I must not tell—poor Susy is quite distressed, and it will be many months before she can do what she proposes."

"Keep your secret, my good children," interrupted Sir James ; "I have no doubt that you will lay out your money to advantage. Go now, and select the things you have chosen." A ticket was then presented to them, and they were dismissed with the most flattering commendations. Betsey Kerr was next called for. She was sixteen years of age, and old enough to be in service ; but her mother being dead, and Betsey very steady, she was kept at home to take care of her brothers and sisters, who were all younger than herself. Notwithstanding her youth, she fulfilled, in a most praiseworthy manner, the trust reposed in her. A neat cottage, a comfortable repast, and a smiling face, always made home desirable to her father. She loved her brothers and sisters, and they, in return, loved, respected and willingly obeyed her.

"What do you wish to have, Betsey?" said Sir James ; "I shall feel great satisfaction in rewarding your diligence."—"You have been already so liberal, that I am not just now in want of any thing necessary, either for myself or for the cottage ; but—"

Here Betsey hesitated, afraid to proceed. Lady Alton observed her embarrassment, and remarked, that a new bonnet would be useful, as hers appeared to be almost worn out. "It is, my lady," she answered, "but I will contrive to make it last another year. If—but I dare not ask, it will be too expensive a gift."

Miss Alton, seeing the uneasiness of her favorite, said, "Speak out, Betsey ; if what you are laboring to ask for,

is worth more than papa thinks fit to bestow, I will make up the difference." Encouraged by this assurance, she modestly replied, "My father is in want of a coat; for some time past, he has had nothing to wear on Sundays but his working clothes; this prevents him from going to church; he labors very hard, yet does but just get enough to keep us; without running into debt he cannot purchase a coat, and this he will not do. I have saved up ten shillings from the produce of the garden, and a little needlework, but so much is still wanting, that I am ashamed to mention it. Father has, of late, often expressed a wish to come to chapel with us, if he had a better coat, and this makes me the more anxious."—"He shall have a coat," said Sir James; "Maria and I will furnish the money that is deficient."

Betsey then opened a little wooden box, and with much joy, and many grateful expressions, presented Sir James with the contents. "I will take your money, my good girl," said he, "that your father, when he puts on his coat, may have the pleasure of considering, that he owes it to the filial piety of his industrious child. He shall be measured this evening, and I will engage to have it finished by Sunday."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said the delighted girl, tears of sensibility rolling down her glowing cheeks; "I never can repay your kindness. I can only pray to God, to reward you, and entreat my brothers and sisters to do the same."—"We desire no better recompense; for the prayers of the virtuous poor in our behalf will reach the throne of the Almighty. Go now, and communicate to your father the success of your application; he will be anxious to hear the result; of course he was acquainted with your intention."

"Oh no, sir, not a creature knew it; father would, I am sure, have forbidden me to ask for any thing of so much value, so I dared not tell him what I meditated. I do not think he is here, but I will run and tell him of your honor's bounty." Sir James bade the delighted girl tell her father, to come for an order to be measured, when she immediately ran off, without waiting to hear another word.

Charles Clayton and his sister were next presented. "Well, Charles," said Sir James, "what reward am I to give you for keeping your garden in such nice order?"—

"Papa," interrupted Frances, "it is the prettiest garden in the whole neighborhood. It is laid out with much taste, and I am quite delighted when I walk in it."—"It is, Miss Frances," said the boy, bowing politely to her, "because you are pleased to admire it, that we take so much pains to keep it in order; father says we never can do too much to show our gratitude, for all you have done for us." Then turning to Sir James, who waited for his answer, he said, "We have still plenty of tools; but if you will please to give me a book on gardening, I shall consider it a great favor."

"A book on gardening!" said Sir James, rather surprised, "why, that will not amuse you."—"I think it will, sir; I work at father's business till six o'clock, and though I like being a carpenter well enough, I would rather be a gardener. I have been thinking, that in a good many years, I may get to be your honor's gardener, and I shall know how to build hot-houses, and make garden chairs, and all that."—"Oh! you rogue," exclaimed Mr. Daily, quite delighted with his youthful genius; "so you want to supplant me, do you? If that is the case, I must be careful how I teach you to lay out grounds, and graft trees!"

Sir James smiled, and shaking the boy by the hand, told him, that if he continued virtuous and diligent, his wishes might, perhaps at some future period, be realized. "You shall have a book on gardening, and Mr. Daily shall select such a one as is best adapted to your purpose. Make a good use of it, but do not neglect your father's business. Be an obedient son, and God will bless you.

"Now, Martha, what for you?"—"You were pleased to give me the first volume of Mrs. Herbert, last year, and it has afforded us so much instruction and amusement, that I shall be very much obliged, if you will now let me have the second volume."—"That book, sir, if I may make bold to speak," said Charles Clayton, the father, who stood at a short distance behind his children, "is, for us poor folks, worth its weight in gold, and we are greatly indebted to the good lady who wrote it. I tell my girl, she must keep it as long as she lives, for if she takes heed of the excellent instruction it contains, she will be sure to do well."

"I expected," said Miss Alton, "that you would ask for it, Martha—so here it is; and if at Christmas you are able

to furnish me with some account of what you have read, I will be at the expense of having the two volumes neatly bound."

The next claimant that stepped forward was Dennis Barton, a stout, athletic youth, whose bronzed countenance bore evident marks of health and labor. "I have not seen you for some time, Dennis," said Sir James, "but a good character always precedes you; whom are you working for?"—"For Mr. Jenkins, sir, and a very good master he is; he says, if your honor will please to give me a sickle, one of his men shall teach me to reap, that I may earn a little more money this harvest."—"Well, I am glad of it," replied Sir James; "you shall have a sickle, or any thing else you may want; your industry and good conduct deserve to be encouraged. How are the old folks?"—"Thanks to your honor," exclaimed an aged voice, "well enough to hobble here." An old man, bent with the weight of many years' labor, then advanced from the crowd, and, in unstudied but grateful language, called down the choicest blessings of the Almighty on the worthy baronet and his amiable family, adding, that, but for them and his dear grandson, he and his old dame must have ended their days in a workhouse.

"You are not indebted to me, my good friend," returned Sir James, "your name is not yet on my pension-list."—"You have done more than money could do," resumed the old man, "in the virtuous education given to our dear boy, and in the reward held out to his industry. But, during the last year, when I have not been able to work, that dear young lady yonder (pointing to Maria) has allowed us two shillings a week, which pays our rent, so that, with Dennis's labor, our garden, and a little knitting which my wife contrives to do, we live very comfortably, and hope not to be any greater burthen to your honor."

Sir James, after thanking the old man for his good wishes, and telling him, that, while he continued a pensioner of Miss Alton's, he would never want a friend, turned to Dennis, and said, "I perceive you are one of our musicians to-day; how do you find leisure to accomplish all you perform?"—"I never wish to be idle," replied the lad; "and since your honor was pleased to give us such a nice bit of garden, and Mr. Daily put us in the way to turn it to the best advantage, it has added much to our



comforts ; so I commonly rise at four o'clock, and work an hour or two before I go to my day's work ; and when I return in the evening, it serves to amuse me till bed-time. In winter, when the evenings are long, I play a bit on my flute ; and in summer, when afternoon prayers are over on a Sunday, another lad and I go into the wood, and have a regular practice."

"Continue, my industrious lad, as hitherto, to cherish and comfort your aged relatives, and be assured, that, in your old age and infirmities, Almighty God will never leave you destitute." Dennis bowed and retired, highly gratified, that his humble labors and virtuous conduct should be noticed by so great a man as Sir James Alton.

In this manner all the young applicants passed before the noble baronet, were presented with some useful article, and encouraged to persevere in habits of industry. A few, who could not prefer any claim for their exertions in the garden, were rewarded on producing some little work of ingenuity, or taste. One boy obtained a recompense for manufacturing a bird-cage ; another, for displaying early specimens of native talent in the art of drawing ; for this he was presented with a box of colors. Thus did Sir James make it his study to improve the condition of his people, by convincing them of the advantages which they would derive from industry and virtue.

The young lads and lasses belonging to the neighborhood of Alton, who were out in service, generally obtained a holiday on this occasion, and sometimes walked many miles to claim the promised reward of faithful service. Those who could not bring a good character never ventured to appear. As soon as this interesting business was disposed of (and it was generally concluded by six o'clock), the bell rang for tea ; the children made their respectful obeisance, and, with three cheers, announced to the spectators that all was finished.

Every one was again in motion. The tables groaned beneath the load of tea apparatus, the bread, butter and cakes, prepared for the children, while the remainder of the large company assembled in groups under the trees at a short distance. Having provided themselves with tea-things, they were abundantly supplied from the house with every article necessary for their regalement. This was truly a rural fête. Every countenance beamed with

delight; every tongue was lavish in praise of their condescending and liberal entertainers. Sir James and his lady enjoyed the imposing spectacle. They walked from one group to another, to satisfy themselves that all partook of the ample store prepared for the occasion. The young ladies invariably requested permission to make tea for the little gardeners; and their affability and cheerfulness, by taking off all restraint from their youthful guests, added much to the hilarity of the joyous assemblage.

When all had been sufficiently regaled, the rustic musicians struck up a lively tune; the tea-things quickly disappeared, and those who loved the sprightly dance formed into couples. Some amused themselves with trap-ball; others with cricket or bowls. The infirm and aged alone were spectators, and these, reclining on the verdant grass, or seated on the scattered benches, felt a deep interest in the busy scene, and, in friendly chat, passed agreeably the fleeting hour. At nine o'clock, the bell announced that it was time to separate. That bell which had before been hailed with so much satisfaction, was now the messenger of unwelcome tidings; for, though the shades of evening were closing fast around, the party were still unwilling to quit their favorite sports.

The young gardeners again formed themselves in procession. They were not now laden, as in the morning, with fruit and flowers, but (as far as they could be procured at the moment), with the rewards which they had obtained for their industry. The arm-chair was carried in triumph at the head of the troop. The multitude, after returning thanks to Sir James, and invoking reiterated blessings on himself and family, gave three hearty cheers; and then the musicians, playing their liveliest airs, escorted the happy assemblage to their comfortable homes.

"I fear, my lord, you have been but ill amused," said Sir James Alton, addressing Lord Harcourt, when the entertainment was over.—"Quite the contrary, sir, I assure you; the scene was novel, and particularly interesting to me, far more so than the most splendid assemblies of fashionable life. It is true, that the latter dazzle the eye, and, for a time, captivate the other senses; but they do not interest the heart, while they too often leave nothing but bitterness behind. Here, on the contrary, the mind can dwell with pleasure, and the recollection of what it has

witnessed, will always afford new delight. You are a fortunate man, Sir James, and one in a thousand. By contributing, as you do, to the happiness of others, you add, without doubt, considerably to your own ; for I am firmly persuaded, that the soul cannot enjoy a more exquisite gratification than that which arises from the consciousness of benevolent deeds. As the festival I have attended to-day was commenced by prayer, I conclude that your system partakes of a religious character."

"It does, my lord ; for it is my opinion, that no plan for improving the lower classes, though otherwise well conceived, can possibly produce the effect desired, or be maintained for any length of time, unless it have religion for its basis. On no other foundation should the Christian philanthropist attempt to erect the edifice of reform. Religion alone has power to curb our passions, and keep them under the guidance of reason. It is true, that interest and the fear of punishment may, for a while, preserve good order among men, but they will not thus be long controlled ; religion only can subdue their hearts, and make them virtuous members of society. Civil laws extend merely to the outward man ; but the religion which Christ came down from heaven to teach, if faithfully practised, regulates the interior, and restrains the desires of each individual within the proper bounds. I feel daily more and more convinced that, to render the poor contented in their humble station, and obedient to the laws of their country, our first endeavor must be to make them virtuous. Their virtue must also be founded on religion, or it will soon fall to decay, when assailed by temptation."

"From what I have seen and heard, since I came to Alton," said Lord Harcourt, "I am persuaded you are right. I entered into conversation this afternoon with one of the spectators, whom I found to be an overseer. He spoke warmly in your praise, and remarked, that the system you pursued had been the means of considerably reducing the poor-rates. He added, that many, besides the poor, had reason to bless the day you took possession of this estate, as every one was so well conducted, that magistrates and lawyers had now nothing to do.

"Before your party broke up, I sought out Susan Jones, for I was curious to know her little secret with regard to her father. With some difficulty I obtained her confidence,

and she at length said, 'Formerly, my father used to spend all his money in drink, and did not care what became of his family; but, for the last few years, he has been continually endeavoring to overcome his bad habits. He will not now venture into a public house at all; but he often wishes that he could afford to have a pint of ale and a pipe, on a Sunday evening, for they would keep him awake, he says, while we read to him. So Tom and I thought, if we were able to sell more flowers next spring, we could procure what he wanted, and it would be such a treat! He is a very good husband now, and a good father too; and he says we owe it all to the kindness of Sir James Alton, and our dear pastor, and that we must pray for them to the last day of our lives.'

"Thus far little Susan, to whom I gave seven shillings, that she might put her design in execution next Sunday. With a grateful heart, she thanked me for my present; but said she did not know what to do with so much, as one shilling would be sufficient for three Sundays. I advised her to request your good chaplain to take charge of the money, and only give her a shilling at a time. To this proposal she readily acceded, and, after many courtesies and thanks, ran off to deposit her treasure. This one instance, among various others that I have heard of, proves the good your system has already effected, and demonstrates the advantages that would result to society at large, were it generally pursued. For though it could not reasonably be expected to succeed with every individual, thousands, at least, would benefit by it; and whatever tends to diminish the number of the wicked, adds to the happiness of mankind.

"To-morrow, Sir James, I must leave you, but it will be with regret; and I shall always consider the breaking down of my carriage as a fortunate accident, since it has been the means of procuring me the pleasure and advantage of your acquaintance."

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

"I HAVE pleasant news for you to-day, ladies," said Miss Hargrave, on the entrance of her pupils after dinner. "What is it?—what is it?" they inquired, all at once.—

"Mr. Morini has just informed me," answered the governess, "that the bishop proposes to be here next Sunday fortnight, to give confirmation."—"Oh, is that all?" exclaimed Frances, in a tone which implied disappointment; "I do not discover any thing particularly delightful in that."—"But I do, Frances," said Maria; "I shall be rejoiced to see the good bishop; he comes but once in three years, and, certainly, it is very desirable that we should be confirmed. I am now turned fifteen, and I should be sorry to wait three years longer."—"How did it happen that you were not confirmed on his last visit?" said Miss Hargrave.—"Because mamma was ill, and just on the point of going into Italy. She, therefore, thought it would be better to defer the ceremony till the next opportunity, lest we should not be well prepared."—"But I suppose Mr. Morini would have been as able to instruct us then as he will be now," said Frances; "unless, indeed, like us, he has new lessons to learn every day. I hope to goodness I shall have done with study long before I am of his age, for I often peep into his room, and generally find him surrounded with books."—"That Mr. Morini was as capable of instructing you formerly as he is at present, there can be no doubt. But your mamma, ever anxious that you should perform all your duties in the most exemplary manner, seems to have wished the sacrament of confirmation to be delayed, till she could ascertain that you made the requisite preparation. And though Mr. Morini would have instructed you, during her absence or inability, with the same care that he will employ now, she was not willing that the entire responsibility should fall on him. She was well persuaded, how much it is in the power of a parent and a governess, to assist the minister of Jesus Christ, in preparing children for a worthy reception of the sacraments, and also, that it is a duty incumbent on them so to do."

"Then, I suppose," said Frances, with a significant smile, "I may bid adieu to pleasure, and expect nothing but admonition, restraint and long prayers, for the next fortnight. I shall be glad when all these preparations are over."—"Dear Frances, you shock me," said Maria, gravely; "if any strangers were present, they would be quite scandalized. Why are you thus indifferent about things of so much consequence? One would imagine, to

hear your remarks, that the duties of religion were extremely burthensome."

"Well, my exquisitely pious monitor," returned Frances, playfully kissing her sister, "so they are to me, and for two very good reasons; first, because I am sensible they ought to be well performed, and that, therefore, they require great attention; secondly, because I love my own dear self so much, that this attention, and the restraint to which I must necessarily condemn my volatile spirits, are always irksome."

"You may ask leave to defer your confirmation for three years," interrupted Miss Hargrave; "you will then be more steady."—"No, indeed," resumed Frances, "I will not hear of such a proposal. I felt so mortified in having neglected to prepare for my first communion when Maria did, that I will not run the risk of being again reproved for a similar fault. When I meet papa this evening, I shall tell him that he will not be teased with any more of my chatter for the next fortnight, as I am going out, and it is only my shadow that he will see; I shall be so grave. I mean to impose silence on my tongue by way of penance."

"And a severe one it will be," said Miss Hargrave with a smile, "and, I fear, much above your strength; however, you will do well to curb, in a slight degree at least, your inclination for talking. You may, at the same time, be assured that Almighty God loves a cheerful heart, and that the natural sprightliness of your disposition will be no impediment to happiness in a future state, provided it be kept within due bounds. Remember, however, that there is a great difference between cheerfulness and that gaiety which proceeds from levity and dissipation of heart; the former should be cherished as a friend, but the latter should be carefully avoided. If our dear Frances should condemn herself to the silence of a Carthusian, we shall lose much entertainment, as her agreeable sallies frequently enliven our conversation."

"I am always pleased when I contribute to the general amusement; but I believe it is often at my own expense: however, I can bear to be laughed at without being out of temper, and am not disposed, as I was formerly, to quarrel for trifles. But now, my dear good governess," continued Frances, embracing her beloved preceptress, "do let this

tremendous preparation be as light as possible : it is an excellent thing that it cannot last longer than a fortnight."

"Do not alarm yourself, my love, with imaginary difficulties," said Miss Hargrave; "I will make this duty, which you seem to consider so formidable, as easy as you can desire. You are fond of talking: we may blend instruction with amusement, and this sacrament may become the subject of our afternoon conversations. The only additional prayers I shall impose on you, my dear children, are the following. I shall enjoin you to recite every day the two hymns of invocation to the Holy Ghost, and a short prayer selected from 'The Whole Duty of a Christian.' These, with one of the excellent lessons from 'Challoner's Meditations,' will not occupy more than a quarter of an hour. The short interval thus allotted to preparation cannot be objected to, even by the most tepid; nor do I absolutely require you to enter upon it, till ten days previous to the one fixed for administering the sacrament, that you may, in some measure, imitate the apostles, who, during that space of time, prepared themselves, by retirement and fervent prayer, for the coming of the Divine Spirit. Endeavor, then, as far as you are able, to copy their example, in order that you may partake of their happiness."

"Protestants," said Miss Mordaunt, "do not generally take much pains to prepare young people for confirmation. They seem to consider it of less importance than Catholics do, because we may be saved without it."—"Protestants only regard it as a sacred rite; the Catholic church ranks it among the number of her sacraments. It is not necessary to salvation, as is baptism; but when it can be obtained, they commit a great sin who neglect it. It can be received but once, and it requires a preparation suitable to its dignity. This preparation, I am confident, you will spare no exertions to make, that you may render your souls a pleasing habitation for the divine guest, who desires to take possession of them."

"May I not be confirmed?" inquired Teresa, anxiously: "I know by heart all that the catechism says on the subject, and I will pay great attention to your instructions. I am almost ten years old; is that too young?"—"Whether we approach the sacraments a year sooner, or a year later, is of little consequence," said Miss Hargrave; "it is the disposition, and not the age, that should be considered.

You have possessed advantages which do not fall to the share of every one; and, if you have profited by them, I can have no objection, provided Mr. Morini has none; but he must be consulted. I am not an advocate for children receiving this sacrament at a very early age.”—“Why not, may I ask?” said Frances; “I suppose it does not require so assiduous a preparation as communion does.”

“In times of persecution, it was customary to confirm children when they were very young, in order that the grace which this sacrament conveys to the soul, might enable them to resist the seductions of error; but now that we have the happiness of exercising our religion without fear or molestation, this practice is not generally observed. The motive for the delay is, that they may be more fully instructed in the nature of the sacrament, and be rendered more sensible of the advantages that accrue from it. Nor ought we to imagine, that less purity of soul is requisite in approaching to the sacrament of confirmation, than to that of the holy eucharist. In the latter, we receive Jesus Christ, the Son of God; in the former, the Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity, with the plenitude of his divine gifts. Why not, then, prepare yourselves with the same diligence for one of these sacraments as for the other, since your souls become, in both, the temple of the one only true and living God? In proportion to the earnestness of your desires, the fervor of your love, the care you take to avoid sin and overcome your evil propensities; so will the ineffable gifts of this Divine Spirit be more or less plenteously bestowed.”

“Is it advisable to make our first communion before or after confirmation?” said Maria.—“Generally after,” replied Miss Hargrave, “but this is not of importance, and it frequently depends on circumstances. I feel persuaded that those who have had the happiness to make their first communion well, will not fail to receive worthily the sacrament of confirmation; so, on the other hand, such as have received, and have been careful to preserve, the graces bestowed in confirmation, will, no doubt, use all the exertion requisite, to approach, in a holy manner, to their first communion. I am sorry to remark, that young people too frequently regard confirmation as a sacrament of trifling import, and that, consequently, they do not prepare for it with the assiduity which it deserves. I am, however, con-



fidant, that many of the choicest favors of Heaven depend on the dispositions which we bring to it, and the diligence with which we correspond to the graces it imparts. As you can receive this sacrament but once, be careful that you have not cause to reproach yourselves hereafter with having received it unworthily.”—“What must we do to avoid so great a misfortune?” asked Maria.

“Recall to mind, my love, the instructions which were delivered to you, previously to your admission, for the first time, to the sacrament of the eucharist, and renew the promises you then made to the Almighty, to be faithful in the observance of his commandments. Earnestly implore him to infuse into you his Holy Spirit, that you may be enabled to persevere in your resolution of never offending him by mortal sin. Remember, that it is only through the grace of God, we can perform any action pleasing in his sight. But this grace, which is ever ready to assist those who humbly invoke its aid, will, if we carefully co-operate with it, enable us to accomplish all that is requisite for our salvation. Our divine Lord has assured us, that it is his delight to be with the children of men; let it be yours to make him a grateful return of love, by seeking to conform, in all things, to his adorable will. This will be effected by cautiously abstaining from all wilful sin, for that alone has the power of chasing away the Spirit of God from our souls. By baptism, we are made children of God, endued with sanctifying grace, and constituted temples of the Holy Ghost. But alas! no sooner do we acquire the use of reason, than the far greater number unhappily employ it to the prejudice of our divine Benefactor, and admit into our souls those enemies which we solemnly pledged ourselves in baptism to renounce for ever. The Holy Ghost then no longer resides within us, but the devil, our sworn foe, takes possession in his stead. Such are the baneful consequences of mortal sin. Wage a continual war against this formidable enemy; it is the only one you have really cause to dread; no other can deprive you of merit here, and eternal happiness hereafter.

“We will renew this conversation another day; at present your mamma requests your company in her dressing-room. On leaving her, you will, perhaps, have no objection to walk with me to Mrs. Stanton’s, and partake of some of her excellent cakes; she has invited you to tea.”

—"O, that will be delightful!" said Teresa, and she urged her sisters to prepare quickly for the walk.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

MARIA, who was always eager for instruction in whatever related to the duties of religion, did not suffer many days to elapse, before she requested her governess to converse on the subject of the approaching confirmation. "Oh, do, madam," said Teresa; "Mr. Morini has promised that, if I pay great attention to the instructions, he will accede to my wishes. It was a long time before I could get him to consent; but I made so many promises of trying to serve God better, that at last I coaxed him to say yes, and I am so pleased."

"My little Teresa means to keep her promises, I hope," answered Miss Hargrave, "and has not lightly made them, in order to obtain her present object. Remember, my love, that Almighty God is witness to all we say and do, and, therefore, we cannot deceive him, though we may impose upon others. Now, to show that you are sincere in the good resolutions you have formed, use greater exertions to overcome the hastiness of your temper, and to restrain the language of impatience, in which you too frequently address your maid; you know that I have had occasion to reprove you on this account very often. Never forget, that servants are human beings like yourself; created by the same all-powerful hand, redeemed, as you are, by the blood of Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps, at the very moment when you are speaking in so unbecoming a manner to your servant, because you consider her beneath you, she is infinitely your superior in the sight of God, with whom there is no distinction of rank. To treat with insulting haughtiness our inferiors in society, is to act in direct opposition to the maxims of the gospel, which command us to love every one as ourselves; and if we consider the subject only in a moral point of view, such behavior is certainly very unbecoming in a lady who has had all the advantages of a polished education.

"If Divine Providence has placed you in an exalted,

and them in an humble rank, could it not as easily have reversed your situations? Reflect what would, in that case, have been your feelings, and determine to curb the rising sallies of passion, by Christian forbearance; for if, while yet a child, you indulge this impetuosity, it will grow upon you, and increase with your age."

"Part of this lesson is intended for me, I presume," said Frances, interrupting Miss Hargrave; "I will endeavor to profit by it; but may we not reprove our servants when they do wrong?"—"Undoubtedly; but it should be in a Christian manner. What can be more humiliating to a lady, than the reflection, that she has yielded to the violence of her temper, and degraded herself, by using language to her maid, which she would have been ashamed, in her cooler moments, to address to the vilest animal? And what is the usual consequence of giving way to these bursts of passion? Your irritability is increased by indulgence, and your peace of mind is, at length, destroyed. If you have a servant high-spirited like yourself, she quits your employ, and you are continually changing; or you must condescend to purchase her submission, by repeated apologies and presents. Aware of your weakness, she often takes advantage of it, and adheres to you through interest, rather than through love."

"But ought we not," said Frances, "to be obeyed by those who engage in our service?"—"Certainly you ought," replied Miss Hargrave; "it is the duty of servants to obey with alacrity the commands of their employers, in all that is just and lawful; and they should even endeavor to anticipate their wishes. You have an unquestionable right to reprove them when they act amiss; but your reproofs and commands must be dictated by reason, and not by passion or caprice, if you desire to secure their fidelity and attachment. Never make too free, nor intrust them with your secrets, lest they betray your confidence, or treat you with too much familiarity. Equally shun the opposite extreme of haughtiness, and that chilling reserve which represses affection, and makes the servant an unwilling slave, rather than a cheerful attendant."

"But these people are paid for their services," said Frances; "and if the rich did not employ them, they would be much worse off than they are, even under a sharp mistress; for they have a sufficiency of food and wages,

and are comfortably lodged.”—“True, my love; allow me, however, to remark, that our obligations are reciprocal. If they, in exchange for food and wages, owe you obedience, respect and faithful service; you, on the other hand, must, from a principle of duty and Christian charity, behave to them with kindness; comfort them in their sorrows; assist them in sickness; instruct them when ignorant of the duties of religion, and reprove them when guilty of misconduct. This latter office should always be discharged firmly, though gently, and never when we are under the influence of passion. Poverty is no disgrace. By nature, all men are equal, though Divine Providence has ordained that, in society, there shall be different classes, in order that each may co-operate to the general good. If all were equally rich, would any be disposed to wait on you? Certainly not.”

“Then,” interrupted Frances, “when we wanted our dinner, we must go into the kitchen to prepare it; and if our clothes were dirty, we must wash them ourselves.”—“And the evil, I am inclined to think,” said Maria, “would not rest here; for who would be found willing to kill the sheep and oxen, to grind the corn, or till the land? I fear we should be very badly off!”

“You would, undoubtedly, and be deprived of the greater part of the comforts and luxuries you now possess. Since, then, all things are so wisely disposed, enjoy with gratitude the blessings of Heaven, but do not abuse them. The lower and working classes are necessary to you; do not, therefore, despise them. Make yourselves beloved by your servants, and they will cheerfully obey your commands. Your education is far superior to theirs; and this circumstance should teach you to overlook many of their defects, and induce you to speak to them in becoming language. Allow me to add, that when they have spent their best days in your service, you ought to consider it your duty to secure them from poverty in their old age.”

“I will go to Susan, this minute,” said Teresa, whose eyes were suffused with tears, “I will go, and beg her pardon for my ill behavior and rudeness this morning, and engage never to be so ill-tempered again.”—“Go, my love,” replied Miss Hargrave, “and, by so doing, you will give me an effectual proof, that you are sincere in the promises you have made to correct your faults.”

"Susan was so pleased, madam," said Teresa, on her return to the school-room, "that she kissed my hand, and told me she did not want any apology, but only hoped I would consider in future, how much I hurt her feelings, when I behaved unkindly; for that she loved me as if I were her own child. She burst into tears, and I could not help crying too; I threw my arms round her neck, and kissed her, assuring her, that I would never, never ill-treat her any more."

"You did well, my dear child; I can have no doubt of her affection for you. She nursed you in your infancy, and, when you suffered so severely from the measles, two years ago, she watched over you with the tenderest solicitude, passing many nights without sleep, that she might administer to all your wants, and facilitate your recovery. Your mamma knows her to be a good Christian, consequently a faithful servant, and, as such, she highly esteems her."

"Ought not Teresa to give something to Susan, by way of making it up, as it is called?"—"Not in this instance, I think, Frances," returned Miss Hargrave; "because I have no doubt, that the humble apology of Teresa has been far more gratifying to her affectionate heart than any present; and it will be much better to secure her regard by future good conduct than to purchase it by gifts. If your sister is anxious to deserve a recompense from your mamma at Christmas, she may ask for something that will be useful to Susan, but only on the condition, that she observe her promise of behaving civilly for the time to come." Teresa was pleased with the proposal, and added, in a tone of entreaty, that if she was allowed to be confirmed, she was sure she would be able to keep her resolution.

Teresa was by nature impetuous, and, for a few years, Lady Alton was apprehensive that she would become a second Frances, who treated her as a plaything, and was continually leading her into all sorts of mischief. But from the time when she attached herself to Miss Mordaunt, on being excluded from the school-room by her former governess, she insensibly lost much of her violence. She was less with Frances, and was, consequently, less teased and irritated. When it happened that her passion and ill-humor became so troublesome, that no one else could

bear with her, she was sent to Maria or Jane, who, having obtained a great ascendancy over her, quickly succeeded in allaying the storm that was raging in her breast. They always contrived, at the same time, to urge some argument, which induced her to ask pardon of those whom she had offended.

These repeated humiliations, with the example and gentle admonitions of Maria, whom she tenderly loved, made, at length, a sensible impression on her mind. As she grew older, she noticed the trouble which Frances experienced in overcoming her defects, in order to be admitted to her first communion. She remembered the delay which had thus been caused, and how much Frances had regretted her negligence. To avoid similar inconveniences, Teresa resolved to combat with herself, and turn to advantage the lessons of instruction she daily received. Within the last twelve months, therefore, having taken Maria for her model and counsellor, her temper was sensibly improved; and though she still retained a considerable portion of her predominant failing, it now displayed itself in a sudden burst of passion, which lasted but for a moment, instead of resembling, as formerly, an impetuous whirlwind, that swept all before it.

Having a sincere desire to amend, she wanted only the help of the sacraments, to enable her to carry her good resolutions into effect, and to render her a most interesting and amiable child. This help was not denied her; for having been thoroughly informed as to the nature of confirmation, and impressed with a just feeling of its importance and advantages, she was admitted to that great sacrament, and profited so much by the graces she there received, that she was judged to be in proper dispositions, at eleven years of age, to make her first communion.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

“THE subject of confirmation was interrupted yesterday,” observed Miss Mordaunt to the governess; “are you willing that we should resume it to-day?”—“I will, with much pleasure, answer your questions,” said Miss Hargrave. “and give all the information in my power.”

“What are the dispositions in which we ought to approach this sacrament?” asked Maria.—“Great purity of conscience, which is to be attained by fervent prayer, and an humble confession of your sins. It is necessary to be well instructed in the mysteries of faith, particularly those which relate to this sacrament. Your souls ought to be filled with faith and hope in God, that, by means of this channel of divine grace, you may receive the Holy Ghost, whom you must earnestly invoke to take up his residence in your hearts; thereby to endue them with courage and strength, to perform all the duties of a soldier of Jesus Christ. What says the catechism, Teresa, on the subject of confirmation?”

“‘It is a sacrament which makes us strong and perfect Christians, able to profess our faith before tyrants and persecutors.’ What is meant by strong and perfect Christians? will the sacrament preserve us from falling any more into sin?”—“If you receive it worthily,” replied Miss Hargrave, “and are obedient to the impulse of the Divine Spirit, it certainly will preserve you from sin, by giving you strength to walk in the way of the commandments, making the yoke of the Lord appear easy, and his burthen light. By baptism, you are made Christians, and are dedicated to God, to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. By confirmation, you are impressed with a new character, and are engaged as soldiers, to fight under the standard of Jesus Christ. You receive, in their fullest plenitude, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by which you will be enabled to overcome the machinations of your enemy, the devil, who wages perpetual war against those who engage in the service of God. If, however, the Holy Spirit be your counsellor and guide, you will have nothing to fear; for, though you must never expect to be wholly free from temptations, on this side the grave, yet you will be secured from the power of your enemies, provided you are careful not to forfeit the grace of God, by mortal sin.”

“Mortal sin!” said Frances, repeating emphatically the last words of her governess; “you are a terrible enemy to it; why, you will not leave self-love one single corner to shelter in; you drew so ugly a picture of the consequences of it the other day, that you begin to make me quite afraid.”

“And it is the only fear,” interrupted Miss Hargrave,

tenderly embracing her charming pupil, "that I wish to inspire you with. I am its enemy, my dear child, and I hope, with the grace of God, I ever shall be. And should I succeed in planting in your breast a salutary horror of this only real evil, I shall not consider that I have been entirely useless. Form a generous resolution, my Frances, never wilfully to offend Almighty God, and be assured that his divine grace will enable you to be faithful to it. What are the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Teresa, as communicated in this sacrament?"

"They are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord. What is meant by wisdom? Shall I be able to learn my lessons better, and acquire knowledge without study?"—"No, my love," returned Miss Hargrave with a smile; "the wisdom, here spoken of, is chiefly that spiritual wisdom, which infuses into our souls all the knowledge that is requisite for our salvation. By it we learn to act with reason and discretion. This heavenly gift enables us to behold God in his wonderful works, and to acknowledge, with gratitude, the beautiful and varied order in which he has disposed all things for our good. By it, our souls are elevated to penetrate the mysteries of faith, to see the instability of human things, and the insufficiency of the wisdom of this world, to qualify us for the joys of the next. If we profit by the light which it enkindles in us, we shall labor assiduously to secure our eternal happiness—the only end for which this divine gift is bestowed. But to answer Teresa's question more directly. If, in a short but fervent prayer, you invoke, every day, the assistance of the Holy Ghost, in order that you may acquire that knowledge which will contribute to the glory of God, to your own sanctification, and to the discharge of your social duties, I have no doubt that you will obtain all necessary aid. Many of the saints, who were well versed in human as in divine science, have acknowledged, that they gained more wisdom at the foot of the cross than from books. You must not, however, infer from this, that prayer without application is sufficient; but only, that prayer ought to precede and accompany study."

"Will you please to describe to us," said Jane, "the nature of the other gifts?"—"The gift of understanding," resumed Miss Hargrave, "will enable you to comprehend



the truths of revealed religion ; the greatness, sanctity and goodness of God ; and to penetrate, as far as is necessary, into those sacred mysteries, whereby he has wrought your redemption, and purchased for you a place in his heavenly kingdom. Having come to the knowledge of what God has done for you, and what he requires of you, the gift of counsel is bestowed, to point out the best means of serving him, according to his divine will. It will direct you in the path to heaven, and enable you to avoid the snares which the devil is continually laying in your way. The spirit of fortitude endues the soul with strength to withstand the temptations to which she is, on all sides, constantly exposed. It will give you courage to comply with what God demands of you, in spite of the raillery of the world, the opposition of corrupt nature, and the force of bad example. It will enable you, my dear children, to overcome your passions, and to bear with patience and submission whatever is repugnant to your inclinations."

"I have great need of this courage," said Frances, "to help me to get the better of what you call my predominant passion—self-will. I must own, that I do like to have my own way."—"And there are few who would not, my love, but that it is contrary to the law of God. When our will is at variance with the will of Heaven, the spirit of fortitude comes to our aid, and strengthens us to resist every impulse that is opposed to the doctrines of Jesus Christ. The gift of knowledge will convince you of the advantages of divine grace, the dignity of virtue, and the happiness you will secure to yourselves by leading exemplary lives. It will enable you to perceive the deformity of vice, and the misery which is the portion of the wicked, both in this world and in the next. It will instruct you, that all things here below are vain, and of short duration, and that to labor for your well-being throughout eternity, is your only necessary affair. The gift of piety will teach you, my dear children, to raise your thoughts to heaven, to look on God as a tender Father, and, as such, to apply to him confidently in all your wants. You will also consider him as your Creator and Sovereign Lord, and humble yourselves before him with the most profound adoration. This gift will enable you to take up the yoke of the Lord with cheerfulness, to keep his commandments, to walk in his footsteps. It will inflame your hearts with divine love,

render the duties of religion easy, and convert those observances, which too many consider hard and painful, into delightful employments."

"Do you think," interrupted Frances, "that, after being confirmed, I shall feel less reluctance to comply with my spiritual obligations than I have hitherto experienced?"—"I can have no doubt of it, my love, if you receive the sacrament with the proper dispositions, and are faithful to the grace which it conveys. Its peculiar properties are, to strengthen and fortify the soul. By baptism, we are made children of God; but we are still weak and unsteady. Confirmation, therefore, is bestowed upon us, that, like the apostles, we may become strong and perfect Christians. Arms are placed in our hands sufficient to overthrow our enemies, and if we do not desert the standard of Jesus Christ, we shall be sure of the victory. Take courage, then, and do not shrink from the combat. The crown of glory, which our Saviour holds out to you in the kingdom of heaven, is worth the contest. Every advantage that you gain over the enemy of your salvation in youth, will tend to diminish his power. As those trees that have slender roots are more easily removed than such as have struck deep into the earth, so our passions, in their infancy, are less difficult to eradicate, than when they have been strengthened by many years' growth. The gift of the fear of the Lord is infused into the soul to restrain it from the commission of evil. This fear, which is called in scripture the beginning of wisdom, impresses the soul with a horror of wilful sin, and a salutary dread of the punishment that will be inflicted hereafter on those who, in this life, transgress the commands and despise the threats of the Almighty."

"Is it not better to serve God through love than through fear?" asked Maria.—"Undoubtedly it is," answered Miss Hargrave; "and this last gift, of which we have been speaking, may properly be called the foundation of charity, and it is inseparable from it. We cannot love God without fearing to offend him; and the more ardently we love, the more careful we shall be to avoid every thing that is likely to awaken his displeasure. The love of God, as I have often told you, makes labor sweet, and smooths the roughest path. Solicit, then, with earnestness, this heavenly gift.

Invite the Divine Spirit to take possession of your souls, and promise, on your part, to be faithful to his inspirations.'

"I observe that the fruits of the Holy Ghost are twelve," said Jane, putting down the catechism; "will you be so good as to explain them?"—"They are the following: Charity, which consists in an ardent love of God, and of our neighbor for his sake. Joy, which infuses into the soul a heavenly sweetness, arising from the testimony of a good conscience, and a sense of the presence of God. Peace, the result of universal charity: a happiness not granted to the wicked; for they are always at variance either with God, their neighbor or themselves, and, sometimes, with all at once."

"That I know to be true from experience," interrupted Frances; "for when I used to be so passionate and quarrelsome, I was never happy."—"Now that you have tasted of the joys of peace," resumed Miss Hargrave, "you will, I trust, be careful to preserve it. I continue my brief explanation. Patience consists in supporting with resignation the pains and crosses with which it may be the will of God to afflict us. Benignity, or kindness, is a readiness to relieve the distressed. Goodness is a willingness to impart to others whatever can tend to their advantage. The gift of longanimity, or long-suffering, strengthens us to persevere in virtue, notwithstanding opposition, and always to seek to overcome evil with good. Mildness enables us to restrain our anger, and to bear injuries patiently. Faith, or fidelity, induces us to be faithful in our engagements, both to God and our neighbor. Modesty, or moderation, teaches us how to regulate every action, and to keep our inclinations under proper restraint. Continency, or temperance, helps us to bridle all inordinate and irregular desires; and chastity, or purity, will act as a shield to preserve us from every defilement, either of soul or body. These, my dear children, are the invaluable fruits which the spirit of God produces in the soul.

"Be you, then, solicitous to prepare for your heavenly guest a pleasing habitation. Let your hearts incessantly sigh after this happiness; and, in the beautiful language of the church, invite him to dwell with you for ever. Say frequently, in the course of the day, 'Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of the faithful, and kindle in them the fire of thy love; send forth thy Spirit, and our hearts shall be

regenerated. Come, and renew in us the fire of thy love: prepare us to receive thee worthily; for without thy aid we can do nothing.’”

“Is it not usual,” asked Maria, “to take the name of some saint, when we are confirmed? I propose to assume that of Mary.”—“Why, that is your name already,” said Frances. “Surely you may find a prettier one. I shall fix on Lucretia, Cleopatra or Cordelia; I am not fond of common names. May I not take any name I like?” she continued, perceiving a smile on the countenance of her governess.

“Certainly, my love, provided it be the name of some saint or holy person, whose life you could read, and whose virtues you might endeavor to imitate; and though it is possible that there may be saints in heaven of the names you mention, they are not, I think, familiar to English ears. Our intention in choosing a name should be, to secure the patronage and intercession of one of those great servants of God, with whose virtues we are more particularly struck. To accomplish this object, we should labor to walk in their footsteps, and make their lives the model of our own.”

“Then I must not choose one of them,” said Frances, “for they are all too perfect for me.”—“It is not for you, my love, to fix the degree of perfection which Almighty God demands of you. He mercifully calls all to salvation, and those who are happy enough to obey that call, and obtain an abode in his eternal kingdom, arrive at it by different paths. Our beneficent Creator, knowing the extreme weakness of his children, requires not the same excellence in all. Jesus Christ has said, ‘In my father’s house there are many mansions.’ In proportion to your diligence in acquiring merit here below, will be the degree of glory conferred on you hereafter; but with this you may comfort yourself, that your happiness in heaven will be complete. However, to gain even the lowest place in this desirable abode, you must be careful to avoid sin.”

“But the perfection of the saints frightens me,” resumed Frances.—“Do not suffer their perfection to discourage you, my love,” said Miss Hargrave. “Almighty God will not require more of you than he will enable you to perform. Renew, every day, your resolution never to commit one mortal sin, for any consideration whatsoever, and beg that his grace may preserve you from deliberate

venial sins. Be faithful in this particular, and rely with confidence on his mercy. You may choose one of the saints for your patroness, even the most holy ; you may implore her intercession, and propose, at a distance at least, to imitate her virtues, without fearing that you will be rejected, because the copy is less excellent than the original."

"I mean to take my own name," said Teresa, "and choose St. Teresa for my patroness. There is a pretty hymn in the Vespers-book, which I almost know by heart ; I will learn it perfectly, and say it every day. I remember reading that she was very pious in her youth ; and, when only seven years old, she and her brother wanted to be martyrs. I am sure I shall never be able to serve God as she did."

"Perhaps not ; but many of the saints, who rose to great pre-eminence in virtue, were not without some marks of human frailty in their youth, and this ought to encourage you to labor in the correction of your faults. Perfection, as I have before observed, is not the work of a day—it is frequently the labor of many years ; and we may think ourselves happy, if we attain to that degree which is required of us, even at the end of our lives. No sooner is one enemy overcome, than another presents itself ; thus we can never be secure, if we lay down our arms. It is to enable us to sustain this continual warfare, that we apply to the sacrament of confirmation.

"You have selected the name of Mary," continued Miss Hargrave, addressing Maria ; "which of the saints of that name do you allude to ?"—"I like the name of Mary," answered Miss Alton, "because it is that of the blessed Virgin, and I purpose to make choice of her for my patroness——"

"But, Maria," interrupted Frances, "as all are recommended to place themselves under the protection of the Virgin Mary, you would, by choosing another, have two friends instead of one ; and surely that would be preferable : you already bear her name."

"Very true," returned Maria ; "but that name I received in baptism : it was not, therefore, my choice. If I assume it now, it will be in honor of the blessed Virgin ; and should I be happy enough to secure her powerful intercession, I shall not stand in need of any other. I greatly respect all the saints, knowing them to be the friends and favorites of the Almighty ; but I cannot resolve to fix on

any one of them, in preference to the Mother of God, to whom I feel more especially devoted. Do you, dear madam, object to my choice?"

"I see nothing reprehensible, my dear Maria, in your devotion to the Mother of God; on the contrary, I approve of it. Place yourself with confidence under her protection—honor and revere her exalted dignity. Imitate, though at a distance, her eminent virtues. She is the mother of mercy, the advocate of penitent sinners. The sufferings which our Saviour endured for his ungrateful creatures have endeared us so much to her, that whoever earnestly solicits her intercession will be sure to obtain it. Honor her festivals by devoutly approaching the sacraments, and never fail to address to her, each succeeding day, your fervent supplications."

"When we speak of the Mother of God," said Teresa, "ought we not to call her the *blessed* Virgin Mary? Frances generally leaves out the word 'blessed.'"

"It is better to accustom yourselves to speak of her, at all times, with the respect which is due to her exalted station, since, next to Jesus Christ, she occupies the highest throne in heaven. It is want of thought, Frances, I presume, and not any unworthy motive, that causes this apparent irreverence. Remember, my love, that, in the 'Magnificat,' she herself predicts, that all generations shall call her blessed, and she has, consequently, a just right to that appellation. She looks upon us with the fondness of a parent, and earnestly pleads our cause before God; and we ought, in return, to conduct ourselves towards her with the respect that becomes dutiful and affectionate children. Young persons, especially, should place themselves under her guidance, and fervently implore her aid; because the influence she has with her divine Son is so powerful, that he can refuse nothing when she undertakes to plead."

"I will be more careful in future, ma'am," said Frances. "It was not from feelings of disrespect, that I have habituated myself to speak of the blessed Virgin in a manner you disapprove, but because I felt little devotion towards her; and I conceived that it would be an affectation of piety to express myself as those do, whose sentiments in her regard are particularly fervent. However, I have remarked some Catholics who omit the word 'blessed,' or 'holy.'"

"Possibly you may, and perhaps from the same cause you have alleged. But want of devotion is not, I conceive, a sufficient excuse for depriving her of the title which was conferred upon her by the Holy Ghost. If to the great ones of the earth we refuse not the honor due to their rank, much less should we refuse it to the Mother of God, who, above all other created beings, is so justly entitled to our veneration.

"Before we quit this subject, let me recommend to you a particular devotion to your angel guardian. Almighty God has conferred on us a great honor in appointing one of his angels to watch over and protect us, amidst the many dangers to which we are exposed. Never fail, therefore, to recommend yourselves daily to his special protection."

"I should like to see the dear, good angel," interrupted Teresa; "I wonder if he is big or little."

"To be admitted to the favor of beholding your good angel in this life, Teresa, is an idle wish that you must not indulge; and whether he be big or little, is a matter of trifling importance. Some chosen souls have certainly been allowed this rare privilege; but we, my love, must be content to view him with the eye of faith, since the God of truth has assured us, that his angels shall protect and guard us in all our ways."

"I think I remember to have read, in the history of Tobias," said Maria, "that an angel, in the form of a young man, conducted his son to Rages; and in the Lives of the Saints, that one, whose name I forget, was favored with the sight of her guardian, who appeared as a beautiful child."

"These, as I remarked before, are rare occurrences. They serve, however, to confirm us in the belief, that these blessed spirits do most certainly attend us, are witnesses to our actions, and ever at hand to defend us from the snares of our spiritual enemy, whose watchfulness to draw us into sin is incessant."

"What must I do to please my good angel?" asked Teresa.—"The heavenly spirit, to whose special care we are committed," replied Miss Hargrave, "loves us tenderly. From the moment in which we are intrusted to his protection, he becomes anxious for our salvation, and does all in his power to promote it. To please him, therefore, and secure a continuance of his affectionate regard, you

must carefully avoid sin, for that alone can alienate his esteem. Respect his presence, and thank him for his tender care every time that you are preserved from danger. Perhaps, for example, you are running heedlessly along—your foot slips, and you fall, but you do not hurt yourself: turn your thoughts in thankfulness to your watchful guardian. You are tempted to do something against the law of God, the commands of your parents or superiors—you overcome the temptation: be grateful to your vigilant protector. Frequently implore him to render to God, in your behalf, the honor, homage and adoration which are due from you to your Creator; and to employ his utmost diligence to procure you the grace of final perseverance, and a happy death—the consummation of all other favors. How grateful we ought to be to our heavenly Father for giving us so powerful an advocate, so amiable a protector! His greatest joy is to see us walk in the paths of virtue—his greatest grief, to behold us indifferent to his inspirations, and obstinate in sin.”

“I have scarcely ever thought of my angel guardian,” said Frances, “though I say a prayer to him every night and morning.”

“But you will now, I hope,” rejoined Miss Hargrave, “make reparation for your former indifference, and honor him henceforth, as the friend and favorite of God, and, also, as one to whom you are, under him, greatly indebted. I hope, my dear Maria, you have not been equally negligent. Answer me with your usual candor.”

“I fear,” said Miss Alton, “that, till within a few months of my first communion, I was not much more attentive to this duty than Frances; but, at that period, mamma suggested to me the advantage I might derive from begging his assistance; and I have, ever since, endeavored to compensate my former neglect by frequently turning my thoughts to him. I entreat his gracious aid, to preserve me from offending God; and I pray him, from time to time, to adore our divine Lord for me in the most holy sacrament.”

“Continue, my love, this laudable practice, and you will not fail to derive benefit from it. Devotion to the saints and angels will greatly contribute to our salvation; for if, with the aid of their example and intercession, we are still so weak and wavering in the paths of virtue, what shall we



not have to fear, if we become indifferent to their prayers, and neglect to solicit their protection !”

“We agreed to talk about confirmation,” said Teresa ; “but Frances, as usual, has introduced another subject.” —“And, if I remember right, Teresa did the same a few days ago,” retorted Frances, good humoredly, “when we received a lecture on behavior to servants.”

“The conversation has been on a useful topic,” observed Miss Hargrave, “and the digression, I hope, will equally tend to your improvement. The little that remains to be said on the subject of confirmation, we will defer to another opportunity.”

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

“WE have been prevented by visitors during the last two days,” said Jane, addressing Miss Hargrave, “from requesting you to continue your kind remarks. Will you, this afternoon, be pleased to resume them ?”

“After the ample instructions you have received from Mr. Morini, there remains little for me to add. We will, however, again make confirmation the subject of our discourse ; and, in order that each may have a share in it, you may inform me, in turn, what you recollect of the explanation which was given to you, yesterday, of the ceremonies used in administering this sacrament.”

“I remember,” said Frances, “that it must be conferred by a bishop ; that it can be received but once, and, consequently, that we must employ great diligence in preparing for it.”

“What was the nature of the diligence recommended ?” asked Miss Hargrave, willing to exercise the memory of her pupils.—“It was recommended,” said Jane, to whom Frances had made a signal that she should answer, “that we should be fervent in prayer, earnestly imploring the divine Spirit to come with all his gifts, and take entire possession of our souls—that we should prepare for his coming by true repentance, and a sincere confession of our sins, with a firm resolution to use our utmost endeavors to avoid all wilful sin for the future. We were exhorted to be more obedient to our parents and instructors, more diligent in

the performance of our religious duties, more careful to overcome our defects, and, in fine, to lead new lives."

"Mr. Morini," interrupted Frances, "does all he can to persuade us to be good; but I fear he will never reform me according to his wishes."

"I predict the contrary, my dear Frances," said Miss Hargrave; "and trust that, with a little exertion on your part, you will speedily answer our fondest expectations."

"Do you indeed think so?" asked Frances, a smile of delight irradiating her countenance; "then I will make still greater efforts to deserve your good opinion."

"Now let me tell you what I recollect of the instruction," interrupted Teresa, anxious to display her knowledge. "The bishop turns towards the persons who are to be confirmed, and prays, that the Holy Ghost may come down upon them. When these prayers are finished, we shall be presented to him, and he will make the sign of the cross on our foreheads with chrism, saying, 'I sign thee with the sign of the cross—I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father,' &c. After this, he will give us a little blow on the cheek."

"Can you describe the meaning of these ceremonies, and the matter of the sacrament?" asked Miss Hargrave. "I learned those particulars," resumed Teresa, "from the little book you gave me, and Mr. Morini's observations yesterday refreshed my memory. The chrism which is made use of, is composed of oil and balm, mingled together, and solemnly blessed by a bishop; this is the matter of the sacrament. The oil signifies the sweetness and tenderness, which all who are confirmed ought to feel in their hearts, and display in their words and actions, towards their neighbors, not excepting their enemies. The balm represents the innocent and edifying life, which we ought to lead, after having been confirmed. The little blow on the cheek is intended to imprint on our minds, that from this time we must begin to be soldiers of Jesus Christ, and willing to suffer affronts and contradictions for his sake, as also that we must be ready to make a courageous profession of our faith, when occasion requires it. The bishop says, 'Peace be with you,' which implies, that if we desire peace with God and ourselves, it can only be attained by suffering patiently all the troubles and persecutions that may happen to us, in the practice of a virtuous life."

"I am much pleased with your attention, my dear Teresa," said Miss Hargrave, embracing affectionately her little charge; "and I hope the instructions which have been delivered to you, will never be effaced from your memory. The character of confirmation will remain indelibly fixed in your soul, and add new lustre to the crown of glory which you will receive in heaven, if you endeavor to improve the blessing which it imparts. Mr. Morini has, no doubt, informed you, what you ought to do after receiving confirmation, and what effect this holy sacrament should produce in the soul. It is now your turn, Maria."

"He has, madam," she replied; "but I fear I cannot repeat all that he has been kind enough to say on the subject; however, I will try to call to my recollection the purport of his remarks. We ought not to leave the chapel immediately after the administration of the sacrament, but should pass some time in returning thanks. We must beg the Holy Ghost, so entirely to take up his abode in our hearts, that, on all occasions, we may be sensible of his divine assistance. We must also make a firm resolution of living according to the perfection which this sacrament requires. The effect of confirmation is, to strengthen us against the power and snares of the devil, to enable us to resist the allurements of the world, and to inspire us with courage openly to profess our faith, and act up to its practices."

"Now that Catholics are not persecuted as formerly," interrupted Frances, "I suppose confirmation is not equally necessary."

"I think you forget, Frances," resumed Maria, "that Mr. Morini, in the course of his remarks, adverted to that objection, and said, that the grace of confirmation is as necessary now to enable us to live in a Christian manner, in the midst of a depraved world, as it would be to strengthen us to endure the pains of martyrdom. That the life of a faithful servant of God is, in itself, a species of protracted martyrdom, on account of the opposition to which he is constantly exposed from worldlings, who studiously hold out to him allurements to sin, turn into ridicule his practices of piety, and condemn, as useless, his virtuous conduct, because it is a tacit reproach to their own. He added, that it requires no small degree of courage and resolution to persevere in the paths of virtue, when the greater number around us live in the unrestrained indul-

gence of their passions ; and that it is often easier to our weak nature to suffer death, the pain of which is frequently of short duration, than to bear up with firmness against the repeated shafts of ridicule, which are malignantly hurled at the virtuous. We shall, therefore, be continually in danger of yielding to the temptations to which we are daily exposed, unless we be supported by the grace which Almighty God abundantly bestows on such as worthily receive this holy sacrament."

"The attention you have paid to these instructions, my dear young ladies, is extremely creditable to you. Let them not be lightly effaced from the memory, but be allowed to sink deeply into your hearts, that they may serve you in time of need."



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"HAVE you made up your mind, Frances, what name to take?" said Teresa ; "you know to-morrow will be the day."—"I opened the 'Lives of the Saints' this morning," replied Frances, "in order to determine, yet I could not please myself ; but having a little time to spare, I read the life of St. Catherine, and I may as well assume her name, though I do not like it, because it is so common."

"It is, however, a most honorable name in heaven," interrupted Miss Hargrave, smiling at the foolish predilection of Frances for what she thought pretty names ; "and I have no doubt, that, if you endeavor to imitate her virtues, it will possess sufficient credit to obtain you admission into the presence of the King of kings, in whose court she holds a distinguished place."

"Imitate her virtues ! why, that means, I must become a saint, which is quite impossible !" exclaimed Frances, laughing at the idea. "Saints, you know, are such demure, serious-looking people, the very thought frightens me. No, I do not desire to be a saint."

"That is, I am convinced, the exclamation of my thoughtless Frances," said Lady Alton, who, at that moment, entered the apartment. "Do you wish to be saved, my love ?" she continued, affectionately kissing her engaging child.—"Surely I do, mamma," she replied,

returning the fond embrace ; “ otherwise I shall be for ever separated from you, and that would be a great misfortune.”

“ But to be separated from God, Frances, would be a misery incomparably greater. Sanctity and salvation, my beloved girl, are, in some degree, synonymous terms : you cannot secure the latter, without a certain portion of the former. What is there in the name of saint that frightens you ?”

“ Oh, mamma, the austere lives they led, their seclusion from the world, their long prayers and severe discipline, must deter me from attempting to imitate them ; besides, what would the world say if a lady of rank were observed to lead the life of a religious ?”

“ It is dangerous to consult the opinion and court the approbation of worldlings,” resumed her ladyship. “ Beware also of indulging the idea, that sanctity should be confined to religious houses, and that such as dwell in the world are under no obligation to lead regular lives.”

“ But, mamma,” said Maria, “ is there no distinction between a person who leads a regular life, and one who leads such a life as is necessary to constitute a saint ?”—“ There is certainly a distinction,” replied Lady Alton. “ Both, indeed, perform the same acts of religion, and cultivate the same virtues ; but as the one corresponds more exactly with divine grace, and subdues the slothfulness of self-love, he invests his actions with all the perfection of which they are susceptible. The other attains only to mediocrity, which, though it does not entitle him to the appellation of saint, will, nevertheless, secure him eternal happiness in heaven. To this latter degree of sanctity all must aspire who hope to be saved. The many wonderful things we read of in the lives of the saints, are held out to our admiration, that we may see and acknowledge the power of God in these chosen souls, rather than as examples that we are obliged to imitate.”

“ But are we not repeatedly told to imitate their example, to walk in their footsteps ? I am sure I often hear such things mentioned,” said Frances, looking significantly at her governess.—“ Yes, my love,” continued Lady Alton ; “ but it is only their charity towards God and their neighbor, their piety, and their hatred for sin, that we are indispensably bound to imitate. Many persons, like my Frances, conceive an erroneous idea of sanctity, and

imagine that it can only be attained by leading an extraordinary life, quite different from the rest of mankind; whereas, by the excellent sermon we heard last Sunday, we are taught, that it is merely requisite to perform our ordinary actions with the proper dispositions, to arrive at the highest degree of sanctity."

"I liked that sermon uncommonly, mamma," said Miss Alton; "but though Mr. Morini made perfection appear very easy in theory, I apprehend that it will be found difficult in practice."

"It may be considered both difficult and easy; difficult, because our weak nature is ever prone to self-love and sloth; easy, because nothing is required above the meanest capacity, or the weakest constitution. Can you recollect, Frances, any particulars of the sermon to which we allude?"—"Mr. Morini stated, that we must love God with our whole heart, keep his commandments, and those of the church, and—and—I forget the rest."

"The little, however, that you have quoted, my love, is very important, and comprises, in few words, the whole of our duties. Never, therefore, suffer this lesson to be obliterated from your remembrance. Were we informed that great austerity was necessary to secure our salvation? that we must quit the world, abandon our riches, deprive ourselves of recreation, company, &c., the idea of which so greatly alarms you, my child, and the greater number of us?"

"No," said Maria; "we were only exhorted to make our common and usual employments subservient to our happiness hereafter, by engaging in them in such a manner, as to render them acceptable in the sight of God, by doing them for His sake, and with a view to please Him."

"From this, then, we may learn," resumed Lady Alton, "that actions, indifferent in themselves, frequently become meritorious or sinful, by the motives which govern our performances of them. The respective duties of each individual must vary with the station he fills in society; but there is one general obligation incumbent on all, which is, to love God and our neighbor, in the manner prescribed by the gospel, and to mortify our unruly passions, and keep them in due subjection to the divine law. From this imperative duty, no rank or condition, sex or age, can claim exemption. By this law, the king and the peasant, the

learned and the illiterate, will equally be judged. The exact fulfilment of this universal law forms the saint; its violation constitutes the sinner."

"Then, I suppose," interrupted Frances, "I may dance, sing, dress, and enjoy the company of my friends, if I offer these acts to God; and I may, at the same time, become a saint, and be sure of gaining heaven"—"Certainly you may, provided you perform all you have enumerated in a suitable manner."

"You smile, mamma; I fear you are going to annex some hard conditions."

"Your eagerness, my love, to be allowed to indulge in the enjoyments of this world, and yet not be excluded from the happiness of heaven, often extorts from me a smile. It is, however, possible, with moderation, to enjoy the one, without forfeiting your claim to the other. You may amuse yourself and your friends with music, as a recreation; but lest it should inspire vanity, and beget dissipation of mind, I recommend you to propose it as a means of elevating your thoughts to heaven, where the angels tune their golden harps, and swell their melodious voices, in praise of the Most High. You may occasionally dance: dancing is, in itself, an innocent amusement, and complaisance to the wish of others may often require you to join in it: do so, but let it be with modesty, in select company, and very seldom at public balls, where vanity, not recreation, is generally the object.

"You may dress according to your station in society; but it must always be with the delicacy which becomes a Christian: neither should the most expensive articles of apparel be sought, when thousands can scarcely find clothes to cover them. The laws of society, charity, the duties of your rank, require you to visit, and receive company; but let not this be the chief business of your life. Attend to it, because it is a duty; but refer it to its proper end, the sanctification of your soul, by keeping a strict guard over your tongue, that it may not utter a single word to the prejudice of your neighbor. If these common and daily actions are offered to God, and performed with a view to please Him, they will possess a degree of merit in his sight, of which we wholly deprive them, by our inattention to the spirit with which we ought to be animated in their performance."

"I think," observed Jane, "it must be very difficult to impart to all our actions the perfection which is required, in order to render them meritorious."

"We must, for that end," resumed Lady Alton, "often do violence to our inclination; but heaven, you know, is to be obtained only by conquest. Raise up your heart frequently in the course of the day, by short but fervent aspirations; and, in all your actions, be ever mindful of the presence of God. The reflection, that you are immediately under the eye of your heavenly Father, will animate you to new fervor, and enable you to overcome all the obstacles that the devil will cast in your way. Resolve to suffer any inconvenience, disgrace or reproach, rather than offend God. Thus shall your days be pleasing to him, profitable to yourselves, and edifying to your neighbor.

"We have had a long, serious conversation, which it is now time to discontinue. I came to invite you to drink tea with your papa and me, as we shall take it early, because, in the evening, we have all some business of importance in the chapel."—"Have you any nice things for us, mamma?" said Teresa, overjoyed at the proposal.—"Yes, my love, plenty; so you must make merry, and recreate yourselves till seven o'clock."

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

MISS ALTON had completed her eighteenth year, and Frances was on the eve of entering hers, when Sir James and his lady decided, rather to emancipate them, by degrees, from the confinement of the school-room, than, at the end of the year they had yet to devote to study, free them at once from its restraints. In their commerce with the world, they had had frequent occasions to remark the dangerous consequences which too often result from transitions so abrupt. To youth every thing appears delightful, that bears the semblance of what the world calls pleasure; and a young lady who, on being removed from the control of a governess, is launched, on a sudden, into gay society, and left, in a great measure, to her own guidance, easily yields to its fascinations. Dazzled by the splendor which surrounds her, and captivated by the homage and attention



she receives, the principles of virtue are apt to lose their wonted influence over her mind. The salutary precepts of the school-room, the early inspirations of divine grace, and the good resolutions she had hitherto formed, are gradually effaced from her memory, and the world, with its delusive, but short-lived enjoyments, takes full possession of her heart.

For Miss Alton, these Christian parents entertained no fears; her virtue was solid, her disposition steady; but they trembled for the thoughtless, the giddy Frances. They were confident of the goodness of her heart, and of her present virtuous inclinations; but they were well acquainted, at the same time, with her love of pleasure, her ambition to shine above others, and her propensity to extravagance. They thought it would be advisable, therefore, to introduce her, by degrees, into society, accustom her to the use of money, in order to teach her economy, and then gently check, in her conduct, whatever appeared likely to tend to her disadvantage.

Of the views of their parents, the young ladies were entirely ignorant; they expected to pass the last year of tuition in the same manner as the preceding years, and they were willing to do so, because they were happy; but when they heard of the change which was to take place, they were, of course, greatly delighted, as every thing that is new is pleasing to youth.

On quitting the chapel, the morning of the day on which Frances attained her seventeenth year, the young ladies were informed by their governess, who was in the secret, that they were to breakfast with their parents. This was an agreeable surprise, because it was not usual, even on a birth-day. After the congratulations which are customary on such occasions, had been offered, Sir James, folding again in his arms the blooming Frances, expressed the great pleasure he had felt on seeing her that morning at the altar. "May I presume to ask," said he, "your particular motive?"—"Because it is my birth-day, papa," she answered. "My governess counselled me to do so, that I might obtain grace to spend this year better than the last; indeed, I have made good resolutions."

"Your improvement, my dear child," said her father, "is a source of inexpressible comfort to us; and if you continue to merit the grace of God, by docility to his

inspirations, and by uniting yourself frequently to him in the most holy sacrament, we shall never have reason to think less favorably of you than at this happy moment.”—“You kindly overlook the past,” said the delighted Frances, pleased with the approbation of the best of parents; “but you are aware that I can never be so steady and serious as Maria. I fear, therefore, I shall often neglect to accomplish my present good purposes.”

“And should you be so unfortunate, my love,” interrupted Sir James, “courageously renew them, and endeavor to be more watchful for the future. Be not surprised at your fall, and rely more on the aid of divine grace, than on your own strength, for overcoming your defects. Preserve your gaiety, for Almighty God loves a cheerful heart; but habituate yourself to the remembrance of his sacred presence, and that thought, without destroying your native vivacity, will check the exuberance of your spirits, and keep them within the bounds of moderation.”

“I feel so happy to-day,” said the lively girl, “that I am sure I shall not be able to study, and so I shall, perhaps, get into disgrace before evening; but I will try to compose myself after breakfast,” she continued, taking a hand of each of her parents, and moistening it with tears of affection; “your approbation has made me quite wild.”—“You shall not be put to the trial,” interrupted her mother, kissing away the falling tear; “your governess, who shares in our happiness, and contemplates with pleasure the reform she has unceasingly studied to effect, will readily grant you a holiday.”

“We, my dear Frances,” said Sir James, taking up the conversation, “as well as yourself, have abundant reason to be grateful to a lady, who, for five years, has devoted herself, with unremitting assiduity, to your improvement. Like a skilful gardener, she has labored to extirpate those malignant weeds, which would in time have destroyed the germs, or, at least, have checked the growth, of every virtue. Though I am convinced, that nothing can so effectually repay the tender anxiety of Miss Hargrave, as your perseverance in the amiable habits she has formed, yet,” continued he, opening a small box, and taking out a valuable cross, “request her acceptance of this little present, as a token of our gratitude, and as a pledge of the resolu-

tion which, I trust, you have made, never to swerve from the virtuous principles she has succeeded in establishing."

Frances placed on the neck of her governess, the birthday gift, which was rendered doubly valuable, from the circumstances under which it was bestowed. Kissing Miss Hargrave affectionately, she apologized for the solicitude which, for nearly four years, she had caused her, and expressed a hope, that her future good conduct would obliterate the remembrance of the past. When disengaged from the arms of her preceptress, she said, with her usual candor, "I am not yet, you know, cured of all my defects. My temper is still too warm, and self-love is not entirely subdued; when, therefore, you see me disposed to be refractory, show me this cross, remind me of this happy morning, and I shall be calm in an instant."

"To overcome our passions, my dear child," said Sir James, "is not the work of a day. Some require a shorter, others a longer time; but if, after many struggles, and years of labor, we finally succeed, the victory will amply reward our exertions. Persevere in your determination to give no quarter to your spiritual enemies, and, though you may sometimes fall in the combat, be not, as I said before, discouraged, but, mistrusting your own strength, implore, and rely with confidence on, the aid of the Most High; and your success will, in the end, be certain and permanent. But enough of this serious discourse. It is a holiday, and we must indulge ourselves in innocent mirth."

"Every day is a holiday for you, papa," interrupted Teresa.—"Not entirely, my love," returned the happy father, "because I do not every day enjoy the society of my dear children: besides, I have, like you, my regular occupations, although to-day I mean to dispense with them, in order to contribute to your amusement. Frances, consult with your sisters, how we are to employ this beautiful morning."—"Indeed, papa," she answered, "this pleasure has come so suddenly upon us, that we have had no time to think; but a walk, a ride, a water-excursion, any thing with you, will be agreeable."

"Oh, my good papa," said Teresa, "do let us go on the water, to that pretty island, about four miles up the river, where, you say, you have built a summer-house; you know we have never seen it."—"But will it be agreeable

to mamma?" asked Maria; "I am aware that the water has not so many attractions for her as for us."

"Perfectly so, my love; the happiness and pleasure of my children constitute mine. Aware that a water-party would be a treat to you, we made, yesterday, the necessary arrangements."—"May we get ready?" said Teresa, impatient to be gone.—"Not yet," replied Sir James; "I must first engage, for a few moments, the attention of your sisters."

Maria and Frances were then informed, that the discipline of the school-room would, in future, be much relaxed in their regard; that they were to breakfast every day with their parents; preside at the tea-table, and pass their evenings in the drawing-room, till ten o'clock, except on occasions when there was much company. They were, in turn, to attend Lady Alton daily, when she gave instructions to the housekeeper, and were to overlook her weekly accounts, in order that they might obtain the knowledge which is requisite to govern, with propriety, a large establishment, and form a judgment of the expenditure necessary for its maintenance. This arrangement afforded great delight to the young ladies. Maria imagined that her knowledge of arithmetic, which she formerly considered a useless science, would now prove advantageous; and Frances pleased herself with the idea of having some command over the servants, and some authority in the concerns of the house. Sir James told them, that he also should claim an occasional hour's attendance in his library, that he might point out to them what authors they should study for their further improvement, and what books they might safely read for recreation. Lady Alton next intimated to them, that their wardrobe would henceforth be under their own control.

"You will be obliged, my dear girls, to dress rather more than you have done. Your papa will, on this account, make you a quarterly allowance, sufficient, with economy, for all that is requisite, but not ample enough for any extravagant purchases."—"No," interrupted Sir James, looking significantly at his second daughter, whom he knew to be fond of dress; "I shall not augment your allowance this year, and, therefore, before you buy, you will do well to calculate your means of payment; for, remember, I will have no debts. From your use of money

this year, I shall judge what confidence I may place in your prudence, when a larger sum will be at your disposal. Make it a rule never to incur debts which you are not quite certain you have resources to answer; and, to prevent mistakes in this regard, accustom yourselves to keep an account of your expenses.”—“ Dear papa,” said Frances, laughing, “do you suppose a lady of rank or fashion can find time for that?”

“A lady of rank, if she make a Christian use of her time,” replied Sir James, “has abundant leisure; but for a lady of fashion, whose sole thought is dress, whose occupation is idle repose or fatiguing pleasure, I will not answer. As you, my children, will not, I hope, be of this latter class, your hours will be so disposed as to enable you, every day if necessary, to devote a few minutes to this useful purpose. You will then, if you are wise, regulate your expenditure by your income; for nothing can be more derogatory to a lady of condition, than to have put it out of her power to satisfy the just demands that are made upon her, as she thereby exposes herself to insult, and, by requiring long credit, to every species of imposition. Here is your first quarter’s allowance,” he continued, presenting each of the ladies with a handsome pocket-book. “Maria will find it more than sufficient, and Frances must adapt her wants to her purse.”

“You will see what an economist I shall become,” said the latter, in great delight; “but what have you in that case, papa? I dare say it is something more for us. Do let me look,” she continued, endeavoring to open it.

“A monitor,” said her father, smiling, “to warn thoughtless youth of the rapidity with which their hours pass away—a friend that, if attended to, will remind them of their duties, and admonish them to profit by the present time, which alone is theirs.”

The box was by this time wrested from the hands of Sir James, and eagerly opened. It contained two elegant watches, and several ornaments.

“Are these for us?” said Maria. “What shall we do with all this finery?”—“Wear it, my love, as occasion requires. You cannot mix in society, without conforming, in some degree, to the prevailing fashion, because singularity is always to be avoided. Be careful, however, not to set your heart on fine clothes, nor suffer your peace of

mind to be destroyed, if they should not happen to be made exactly to your taste. Never aspire to be the most splendidly dressed in the company, and your apparel will neither awaken envy in others, nor vanity in yourself."

"I am aware that you are rather a severe censor on dress, papa," said Maria; "and I shall always feel most happy to be guided by your judgment."

"Your mamma," returned Sir James, "is perfectly qualified to direct your taste. Consult her in your purchases and choice of colors, and your attire will not fail to meet my approbation. Let your dress always be according to your station—simply elegant, but never studiously fine. Modesty and simplicity are the best ornaments of youth. Remember, when about to adorn your person, that you are a Christian, and accountable to God for every excess, whether in the cost of the articles, or in solicitude to obtain such as are rare and uncommon. One word more: I charge you invariably to allow the persons you employ sufficient time to prepare what you require, without exposing them to the risk of transgressing the law of God, by working on a Sunday."

The young ladies promised obedience to this injunction; and, with many thanks and caresses for the presents, hastened to make ready, as the boat was ordered at twelve.

Lady Alton had observed all the precautions suggested by Christian prudence, to crush in her children the growth of pride, and that dangerous love of vanity and dress so common in young persons. Their attire had hitherto been very plain, distinguished only for its extreme neatness; nor were they permitted to wear any ornaments, except such as their own taste and industry enabled them to prepare. Sometimes, on occasion of their annual visit to one or other of the fashionable watering places, the young ladies, seeing numbers of their own age, and of inferior condition, make a much more dashing appearance, were tempted to complain of the simplicity of their own apparel, and to express a wish for finer clothes. Their mother, to convince them that her refusal was prompted by none but the most justifiable motives, would tenderly explain to them the reason of her conduct.

"It pains me," she would say, "to refuse my dear girls any thing they wish for; but I am apprehensive that many parents will have to answer, before God, for planting in

the hearts of their tender offspring the seeds of pride, even in infancy, and fostering them in youth, by attaching to dress an importance of which it is by no means worthy. I admire neatness; your dresses are always well made, and of a fineness suited to your rank: with this you must be content."

Maria was satisfied. Frances, less easily convinced, and fond of argument, said, "But, mamma, there is nothing then to distinguish us from the vulgar, as no one will examine the quality of our frocks."

"Fine clothes, my love," returned her ladyship, "are, at best, and in this country particularly, a very uncertain criterion whereby to judge of rank. The love of dress, which unfortunately pervades all classes, may, from its dangerous tendency, be considered as a great moral evil. Let the rank of my dear children be discovered by the condescension, urbanity and politeness of their manners, rather than by the vain distinction of apparel. Let your virtues, and not the splendor of your attire, secure you respect: the former will make an impression not easily to be eradicated, in the hearts of those with whom you converse; while the remembrance of the latter will be speedily effaced by the next gay object that presents itself."

"Shall I never be allowed to dress as I please, mamma?" asked Frances.—"Yes, my love, when your education is finished. I shall then exercise no control over your wardrobe, unless I remark any gross impropriety."

Thus habituated to restraint, the young ladies became by degrees indifferent with regard to what is called dress; and afterwards, when permitted to use their own discretion, never exceeded the bounds of moderation, either in the cost or fashion of their clothes.

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## CHAPTER XL.

MISS HARGRAVE had just been proposing to her amiable pupils that they should amuse themselves, while at work, by endeavoring to recollect the order and meaning of the different festivals which the church enjoins us to observe, when they were interrupted by the entrance of Lady Harcourt, who was again a visitor at the Park.

"Will you allow me to spend an hour or two in your society this afternoon?" said her ladyship, as she gently opened the door. "It is a long time since I have had any chat with you, and I always derive improvement and pleasure from your conversation."

"We are greatly obliged to your ladyship for your compliment," answered Miss Alton; "but still more so for the favor of your early visit to the school-room. We are always happy to see you; yet I fear Alton Park has but few attractions, as it is nearly two years since your last visit."

"Not so, my love, I assure you, for I never pass time more agreeably than in this elegant retreat: it is, to me, like the enjoyment of a calm after the dangers of shipwreck. I remark that you all look cheerful and happy. Are you not almost tired of the school-room? I should conceive that you are old enough to quit it, and you are, no doubt, longing for the moment when you will be freed from its restraints."

"I am so contented," said Maria, "under the tuition of our dear governess, that I entertain no wish for the arrival of that period, towards which, I am told, so many look forward with anxiety. I do not expect that dissipation and gaiety will be at all conducive to my happiness."

"I, on the contrary," interrupted the lively Frances, "hope to be much happier. I shall soon begin to count the months, next the weeks; then adieu to writing, books and work, except as fancy leads. Papa has promised to take us to London, and after that to Paris. Oh how I long for the time! Dear Lady Harcourt, why did you bring the subject to my recollection? I shall not be able to think of any thing else during the whole day."

"Endeavor to enjoy the present moment, my young friend," said Lady Harcourt; "for be assured that, if the world presents you with roses, they will not be unaccompanied by thorns."

"Your ladyship has, no doubt, experienced," said Miss Hargrave, addressing their visitor, "that amusements, in order to be enjoyed, must be resorted to sparingly. Dissipation," she continued, "is beset with innumerable crosses. Besides the lassitude which it entails on the body, the mind also becomes enfeebled, and the taste corrupted. Useful pursuits rarely occupy the leisure



moments of a young lady of fashion. Wearied with the toils of the midnight circle, she rises late, and day after day is passed in listless idleness. The events of the preceding evening, or the projection of new parties, are the only subjects of conversation in which she is interested. If she has leisure to read, a novel is usually her choice; because, incapable of reflection, and even fearful of calling home her scattered thoughts, lest they should condemn her actions, a serious book, she exclaims, will put her in the horrors. Thus"——

"Dear madam," said Frances, interrupting Miss Hargrave, "you are going to darken all my bright prospects, and dash to the ground the pretty fabric my imagination had raised. But surely all who participate in the pleasures of the world do not necessarily live in the manner you have described."

"Not necessarily, yet I fear it is too generally the case; but my remarks are intended to apply to those only who seem to consider amusement as the chief business of their lives, and I am very far from including such as partake of it with moderation."

"I assure you I mean to be of the latter class," returned Frances, half serious, half smiling, "and to sip very cautiously of pleasure's gilded cup. I dare say, indeed, that you tremble for your giddy pupil; but, you know, there sits my pious monitress (pointing to Maria), who will keep my gaiety within due bounds."

"As long as your amiable sister is your companion, and you are disposed to follow the advice of your parents, I shall have nothing to fear. It is only if left to her own guidance, that my beloved pupil would cause me any apprehension. Dissipation, Frances, wears, at first sight, a pleasing aspect, the more successfully to delude her votaries; but, when these become intimate with her, she lays aside her borrowed plumes, drops the mask, and discovers all her native deformity."

"When she does that," said Frances, "I think it will be time to quit her service."—"True," returned Miss Hargrave; "but unhappily, she lays so forcible a spell on those whom she once engages in her toils, that though she can no longer deceive them under the fallacious name of pleasure, yet the habit which they have contracted, of following wherever she is pleased to lead, deprives them, as it were,

of the power of opposition ; and, though the ball, the opera, the concert, and the theatre, by being, season after season, nightly frequented, have lost the charms of novelty, they are still resorted to, in order, if I may use the common expression, to kill time. As age steals on, these diversions are succeeded by the equally, if not more dangerous, fascinations of the card-table. To break with this world and turn our thoughts to the next, after a life devoted to pleasure, is no easy task. It will, therefore, be advisable to moderate your thirst for amusement, in order that, by observing Christian temperance in all your actions, you may escape the risk of forfeiting your claim to the eternal joys of heaven."

"I hope I shall be able to recall this conversation," said Maria, "whenever I am in danger of being captivated by the seductions of the world."

"Well, I cannot but think that Miss Hargrave is too severe upon the world," said Frances, with a sigh ; "but what is your ladyship's opinion ? I presume you will support my view of the question, as I am aware that the Misses Harcourt have been introduced, and that they were delighted with the liberty they enjoyed, the diversions of which they partook, and the compliments that were paid them."

"I lament to acknowledge, my dear young lady, that my daughters have not had all the advantages which you possess. They have been educated, as young ladies of fortune very generally are, for this world, rather than for the next. Instructed at home till the eldest was fourteen, and too headstrong to be longer kept in subjection by a young governess, I at length consented to place them at a fashionable boarding-school. Here they were carefully initiated in all the polite accomplishments becoming their rank ; but I learned, with regret, that the inculcation of religious knowledge had been but a secondary object. Thus they had no defence against the allurements of the world ; and though their moral principles are, I trust, unexceptionable, their idleness and love of pleasure give me constant uneasiness.

"Your governess, my dear Frances, has not exaggerated the character of dissipation. Follow, then, her advice, and assiduously shun the destructive vortex, in which the frail bark of youthful virtue is so liable to sink. Medicines of a delete-

rious quality, skilfully administered in small proportions, restore health; but when taken without judgment, they inevitably cause death. In the same manner, pleasure, indulged with moderation, infuses vigor and cheerfulness; but, pursued without restraint, it quickly destroys both, and renders its deluded votary the sport of unceasing inquietude. I speak not so much from my own personal knowledge, as from the remarks I have made on others; but had I not been prevented by circumstances, rather than by inclination, from plunging early into the gaieties of fashionable life, I should, no doubt, have been as deeply engulfed as those whose case I deplore; for I was not provided with the armor of religion, to secure me from the fascinations of pleasure. My instructors were careful to instil principles of morality; but I am conscious, that these are not sufficient to prevent us from yielding to the dangerous customs of the world."

"Your ladyship is perfectly right," said Miss Hargrave. "It is on the morality of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not on that which infidel philosophers inculcate, that we must depend, in the hour of trial, for support against temptation, and the allurements of the age. We are naturally prone to evil, and averse to whatever opposes our darling passions. To enable us, therefore, to live in a Christian manner, in the midst of a corrupt world, it is necessary to implore the divine assistance; for a due sense of religion alone, and of the obligation we are under of worshipping God, and saving our souls, can endue us with courage to contend against the sarcasm of those, who turn into ridicule all who exhibit the smallest semblance of piety."

"I know not how it is," said Frances, "but you always make it appear, that rank and wealth confer no great advantage, because of the danger with which the possessor is surrounded. Why, I shall be as much fettered, when I am introduced into the world, with the sage doctrines you wish to instil into my giddy head, as I am now by the restraints of the school-room."

"It will be happy for you, my dear child, if my sage doctrines, as you call them, make an impression on your mind sufficiently deep to control your native impetuosity. I do not object to your partaking of the amusements which become your age, and your condition in society. I am only anxious that your pursuit of pleasure should, at all

times, be regulated by discretion, that it may not exceed the limits which the gospel prescribes."

"If riches," said Maria, "could ensure us no other enjoyments than those which dissipation and luxury hold out, then I should admit that they are not worth possessing. But when I consider how much good we may accomplish by the right application of them, in relieving the distressed, and adding to the comforts of those who are less fortunate than ourselves, I rejoice that I am likely to be rich, and I earnestly beg of God to give me a compassionate and feeling heart. I am of opinion that no pleasure can exceed that of contributing to the happiness of others; and I am firmly persuaded, that mamma and papa derive more solid gratification from the deeds of beneficence they are constantly designing or performing, than is experienced by those whose evenings are always dissipated in a brilliant circle, and whose mornings are passed in bed, or are otherwise idled away. How delightful it is to reflect," continued Maria, her noble countenance glowing with animation, "that hundreds of voices are daily raised to solicit the protection of Heaven for our dear parents, who are ever conferring blessings, and are thus reciprocally blessed. The acclamations with which they are received, on their visits to either estate, and the expressions of regret that accompany their departure, arise not from the empty adulation which rank and opulence seem to demand, but from hearts glowing with gratitude for benefits received. Whilst I behold them so happy, and so much beloved, I have no other ambition than to imitate their example."

"Continue, my dear Miss Alton, to cherish these amiable sentiments," said Lady Harcourt; "they do you honor. They are not, indeed, such as will please the generality of persons; but they will secure you the approbation of your own heart, and the esteem of the virtuous. If you do not aspire, like your sister, to shine as a star amid the votaries of fashion, your rank will always procure you admission to their society, and your merits will command their respect. But I have caused a sad interruption to the discourse you were engaged in on my entrance. I must now beg you to resume it, or your attentive governess will be uneasy, lest I should introduce the spirit of dissipation into this abode of industry and rational amusement. It struck me, that you were speaking of some of the festivals which were

observed in the Catholic church; will you oblige me by continuing the subject?"

"With pleasure," said Maria; "yet I fear it is little calculated to afford amusement to your ladyship, as you are not a Catholic."

"For that very reason," said Lady Harcourt, "it will be interesting to me. I wish to hear an explanation of those observances in your church, which Protestants refused to retain, under the idea that they were useless or superstitious. I shall be happy, therefore, to listen to your remarks, and will take the liberty to offer my objections, as they may occur. And first, what have you to say of Advent, the season we are in now, and which our church notices as well as yours?"

"Your ladyship will not, I hope, expect from us," resumed Maria, "a very minute description, as we have been required to commit to memory only the most prominent circumstances. The church commences her ecclesiastical year with the season of Advent, the first Sunday of which is the nearest to the feast of St. Andrew, the 30th of November. It consists of the four weeks that immediately precede the festival of Christmas. The intention of the church is, that we should employ this holy time in preparing ourselves to celebrate worthily the birth of Christ, by means of retirement, fasting and prayer. In imitation of the ancient patriarchs and prophets, we are exhorted to sigh after the coming of our Saviour, and, for that end, the church, in her solemn offices, makes frequent aspirations to accelerate, as it were, the arrival of her beloved spouse. The Wednesdays and Fridays during Advent are fasting days. The Ember-days also, for the winter quarter, are kept at this period, and are the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday which follow the 13th of December."

"I think," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "our calendars notice the ember-days, but the church does not seem to consider them of much importance. What reason have you for attending to them?"

"It is an ordinance," returned Maria, "of great antiquity in the Catholic church. The ember-days are fasts commanded to be observed, at the four seasons of the year, in order to consecrate them to God, to implore his blessing on the fruits of the earth, and thank him for the benefits we have already enjoyed. We are to petition for good and

virtuous pastors, and pray that he will shower down his graces on those who, at this time, receive ordination. The three other seasons are, the week after the first Sunday in Lent for the spring quarter, Whitsun week for the summer, and the week following the 14th of September, for the autumnal quarter."

"What do you mean by fasting?" inquired Lady Harcourt: "good fish dinners must be a luxury rather than a mortification, and your healthful countenances by no means indicate, that you are restricted to an insufficient quantity of food."—"We do not fast," rejoined Maria, "but only abstain. Fasting consists in taking but one meal, which is dinner, during the twenty-four hours, with the exception of a slight refreshment in the evening, termed collation."

"But, I presume," said Lady Harcourt, "that at this collation, butter, eggs, cheese, milk, oysters, lobsters, &c. may be eaten, and with these you may make an excellent repast."—"The regulations on this head vary in different countries," said Maria, "and none of the articles you have enumerated enter into the list of indulgences granted in England. Fasting being intended to mortify the appetite, the church prescribes only such food as is not calculated to excite it. Neither is it allowable to eat, at collation, as much as we please, nor to take any food between the hours fixed for refreshment."

"Well, I must confess," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "I should not like to be controlled in my appetite, nor can I comprehend the necessity of it. To refrain from flesh on certain days must surely be a remnant of heathenish superstition; for what greater harm can meat do you on Friday or Saturday,\* than at any other time? It does not appear to me that the Almighty requires this observance; our church considers that he does not, and, therefore, she has not imposed it on her children."

"The Protestant church," resumed Maria, to whom Lady Harcourt chiefly addressed herself, "has rather suffered the practice of fasting and abstinence to fall into disuse, through relaxation of discipline, than made any formal renunciation of it. Numerous fasts were prescribed in

\* Since this work was prepared for the press, the obligation of abstinence from flesh-meat on the Feast of St. Mark, the three Rogation days, and the Saturdays throughout the year, except such as may be fasting days, has been dispensed with, as far as regards the Catholics of England.

the old law by the command of God himself, and, in the new, this species of mortification was sanctioned by our blessed Saviour, who, in his fast of forty days, sets us the example. The apostles, in imitation of their divine model, practised fasting themselves, and enjoined it to their followers: thus it is coeval with Christianity itself. With regard to abstinence from flesh-meat on certain days, I have only to remark, that Catholics act not, in this particular, from superstitious motives. We are not so absurd as to believe, that meat itself, on Friday or Saturday, is less nutritious than on other days; but to eat it would be an act of disobedience to the precept of the church, by which we should offend God. It was not in the beautiful apple, which tempted our first parents, that the seed of death was contained, but in their formal violation of a positive command."

"But what authority has the Catholic church," asked Lady Harcourt, "to give laws to all mankind, and compel them to submit to her oppressive yoke?"—"She compels none to receive her injunctions," said Miss Hargrave, who now took up the discourse, "but such as call themselves her children. Her authority is from God. We are instructed by our Saviour to hear the church. 'He that will not hear the church,' he says in St. Matthew, 'let him be to thee as a heathen or a publican.' The Catholic church, therefore, guided in all things by the Spirit of God, has imposed certain regulations, to which she exacts our obedience under pain of mortal sin. As we must all acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, we ought cheerfully to undergo the punishment which is denounced against sin. 'Unless ye do penance, ye shall all perish.' Fasting and repentance, which ought always to accompany each other, saved the Ninevites from destruction; and they have often, on more recent occasions, had the effect of turning aside the indignation of God."

"But are children, sick and aged people, subject to this law?"—"Children from the age of seven years," answered Miss Hargrave, "are expected to abstain, if their health permit; but they are not obliged to fast till they reach the age of twenty-one: the aged, sick, and infirm, can always procure a dispensation by applying for it."

"What!" interrupted Lady Harcourt, "if any persons

conceive that fasting or abstinence does not agree with their health, must they ask the permission of a priest to take what they require?"—"Undoubtedly," said Miss Hargrave. "Always partial judges in our own cause, and unwilling to suffer any restraint, the duty of fasting would, I fear, be very little attended to, if we were at liberty to dispense with it ourselves, on every trifling inconvenience which we might be subject to from its observance. The church having established certain laws, conformable to the commandments of God, for the uniform government of her children, her ministers can mitigate or dispense with them, as the urgency of the case may seem to demand. If our occupations or our health render some indulgence expedient, we have only to state the same faithfully to our director, and he will grant us the permission desired. But if we have no other ground for such a request than a dislike to mortification, and the wholesome restraint of appetite, the acquiescence of the church will not avail us in the sight of God, and we shall incur the guilt of sin, by seeking it under false pretences. But to resume our subject. What festival immediately follows Advent, Teresa? Can you recollect?"—"Perfectly well," she answered, gratified in being thus appealed to: "it is Christmas day; a day I am very fond of, because we dine with papa and mamma, have a great number of delicacies, and are extremely merry."—"But, my love," interrupted Maria, "are there no better reasons why we should rejoice on Christmas day, and remember its return?"—"Yes," said Teresa, blushing at the gentle rebuke, "there are other reasons. I have not quite forgotten the conversation papa held with me last Christmas day, when we happened to be alone for a little while. He tenderly caressed me, and told me how grateful we ought to be to God, for having been pleased to give us his only Son to die for our salvation. That on this day we celebrate the sacred birth of Jesus Christ, who, though he could have commanded a most sumptuous palace, nevertheless chose to be born of a poor mother, with no better habitation than a stable, exposed on all sides to the inclemency of the weather. Papa said, it was to testify the excess of his love for us, and to teach us humility, that our divine Redeemer would appear in the world in this abject condition; and that, though we ought to



rejoice on this great festival, on account of the benefits it confers on us, we should also commiserate the sufferings of our infant Saviour, and show our feeling of them, by endeavoring to relieve him in the persons of the poor. I suppose that is the motive which induces papa and mamma to give away so much bread, meat, coals, and other things, on Christmas eve."—"It is, my love," observed Miss Hargrave; "and yourself and sisters also share in the good work, in proportion as you have more or less diligently prepared clothing for the aged, and those who are not able to work for themselves."

"What!" exclaimed Lady Harcourt, "are the delicate fingers of these young ladies ever engaged in such menial employments?"—"Yes, madam," answered Miss Hargrave; "much to their credit, they spend, every week, a portion of their time in working for the poor, and the articles are usually supplied out of their pocket-money. It is four years since they established this laudable custom, and they derive, every year, new pleasure from it."

"Can you inform us, Teresa, why the same priest usually celebrates three masses on Christmas day?"—"The reason of it is explained in the practical catechism," she said; "but I cannot give you the exact words. The object is to commemorate the three-fold nativity of the Son of God. The first of these masses, said at midnight, is intended to honor his temporal nativity of the blessed Virgin; the second, his spiritual nativity in the souls of the just; and the third, his divine nativity, by which he is born of his Father from all eternity. We ought, on this day, in concert with the angels, to return our grateful thanks to God, for the inestimable benefits he has been pleased to bestow on us and all mankind."

"The next festival is the Circumcision, or, as it is likewise called, New Year's day, being the first day of the year. On this day, our blessed Saviour submitted to the painful law of circumcision—a sacramental rite which was administered to male children on the eighth day of their birth, to distinguish the chosen people of God from other nations, and to cancel, as the sacrament of baptism does in our regard, the debt of original sin. Although, as Christ was infinitely pure and holy, he stood not in need of this ceremonial, yet he acquiesced in it, in order to show, that he was really man, like unto us, to manifest

his profound humility, and to testify the excess of his love, by shedding his infant blood. We ought, on this festival, to beg pardon of God, for our ill use of the years he has already granted us, and to make a resolution of serving him more faithfully for the time to come."

"All this is very well remembered, Teresa; but you have omitted to remark, that on this day our Saviour publicly took the holy name of Jesus."—"I had not forgotten the circumstance, ma'am, but only thought it unnecessary to state that which every one is perfectly acquainted with. I recollect, also, that Christ brought this name with him from heaven. It signifies saviour, and we should pronounce it with great veneration; for the catechism observes, that 'at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow.' May I repeat what occurs to me on the subject of the next festival?" she continued, addressing her governess.—"You may, my love; provided your explanation be judicious, and not too long."

Teresa continued. "The Epiphany, or twelfth day, as it is sometimes termed, being twelve days after Christmas, is on the sixth of January. It is observed in the church with great solemnity, to commemorate the calling of the Gentiles, in the persons of the wise men. They are supposed to have been three kings, from the most easterly part of Asia, who, on remarking a star of uncommon appearance, were forcibly struck with it; and, being interiorly enlightened by God, they discovered it to announce, that a great king was born, to whom divine honors were to be paid. Obeying the impulse of the Holy Ghost, they immediately prepared for their journey, and were preceded by the beautiful star, till it conducted them to the humble stable of Bethlehem. As soon as they beheld the divine infant, they prostrated themselves at his feet, and laid before him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, by which they acknowledged him to be, at the same time, God, King and mortal man. We are exhorted, on this festival, to return our grateful thanks to God, for having called us to the knowledge of his saving faith. And though we are not required to offer him gifts similar to those of the wise men, we should, at least, present him the homage which was signified by those gifts, and which he values infinitely more; namely, the pure gold of divine charity, the incense of prayer and adoration, and the myrrh of a

contrite and humble heart. The church also commemorates, on this day, two other epochs in the life of our Saviour—his baptism by St. John in the river Jordan, when he was twenty-nine years of age, and the performance of his first public miracle, a year afterwards, at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee."

"Thank you, my love," said Lady Harcourt, surprised at the correctness with which Teresa had acquitted herself; "you do great credit to your kind instructors. Continue to increase and treasure up in your mind a store of useful knowledge, and you will seldom feel the loss of company, though destined occasionally to pass some hours alone. Are these the only festivals you celebrate at this season?"

"The three which Teresa has named," said Miss Mor-daunt, taking up the discourse, "are the only holidays of obligation; but there are several saints' days, which the church observes with particular devotion. These do not require us to desist from our usual pursuits, nor even impose on us the obligation of hearing mass. Nevertheless, we are exhorted to be present at the holy sacrifice, on such days, in order to return thanks to God for the favors he has been pleased to bestow on his elect; to beg that his grace may strengthen us to walk in their footsteps, and to pray that, through their intercession, we may obtain pardon for our sins.

"The twenty-first of December (the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle) is a day of devotion. He received the honor of martyrdom in defence of the truths he taught.

"The twenty-sixth of the same month is dedicated to the memory of St. Stephen, the first martyr. Being one of the seven deacons, and a faithful follower of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, he became obnoxious to the Jews, and was stoned by them, for advocating the cause of his divine Master. His feast has been kept the day after Christmas day, from about the fourth age.

"On the twenty-seventh, we celebrate the festival of St. John the Evangelist, the favorite disciple of our Lord. He had the special privilege of leaning on the bosom of our Saviour at the last supper, and the honor of being chosen by him as the protector of his blessed mother. St. John exercised his apostolic office chiefly at Ephesus.

He died at a very advanced age, after having, at various times, suffered much in defence of the Christian faith.

"On the twenty-eighth, the feast of the Holy Innocents, the church commemorates the murder of those little babes, whose infant blood was shed by order of the cruel Herod, in the hope that Christ would be included in the number; but, by a timely flight into Egypt, He escaped whose life alone was sought for.

"On the twenty-ninth is St. Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, an Englishman. He was martyred in the reign of Henry the Second, for maintaining the rights of the church. His sanctity was attested by numerous miracles."

"I am sorry, my young friends," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "to leave you, but the second bell summons me to the dining-room. The first leisure afternoon I can command, I shall request you to resume this subject, as I have some observations to make which time will not now permit. Adieu! It is well I am dressed, or I should lose half my dinner; the moments have passed so agreeably, that I was not aware of its being so late."

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## CHAPTER XLI.

LADY HARCOURT, who was much pleased with the cultivated understanding which she discovered in the daughters of her amiable friends, as well as with their affability and unaffected manners, spent much of her leisure in their society, and contributed, by her cheerfulness, to the general amusement. When serious conversation could be introduced, her ladyship usually adverted to religious subjects, though from motives of curiosity rather than of piety. She wished to learn from Catholics themselves, with whom she had hitherto had few opportunities of conversing, whether the tenets she often heard reprobated, actually formed part of their creed. It was by no means her intention to engage in controversy; she simply desired to know the grounds of their faith and practice; and she conceived, that, from minds unsophisticated, as were those of Miss Alton and her sisters, she should hear the honest truth.

She, therefore, applied to them very frequently, to the

great annoyance of Frances, and their answers were always such as to inspire her with a favorable opinion of their intellectual endowments, and to demonstrate the care which had been bestowed on their religious instruction.

"Well, my dear girls," said Lady Harcourt, after she had been diverting the young ladies for nearly an hour, with some laughable but harmless anecdotes, "your governess will begin to fear that I shall make you quite wild, if we continue this strain of mirth any longer. Let us, then, compose our thoughts, and, if Miss Hargrave does not object, resume the subject of a former conversation; namely, your various festivals."

"I have no inclination whatever to oppose your wish," returned the lady who was appealed to. "I am, indeed, rejoiced when my pupils have an opportunity of exercising their memory. I should regret to observe in them a turn for theological disputation; but I hope they will always be competent to give a reasonable account of the faith they profess. As their catechism will enable them to answer the chief objections your ladyship may propose, I shall only take part in the conversation when they appear to require my assistance."

"I, also, must be silent now," said Frances, "and leave to Maria and Jane the honor of amusing her ladyship; for I possess not, you know, the organ of order; and things are so jumbled together in my giddy brain, that it is not possible for me to furnish a circumstantial statement. Dispute suits me better than simple narrative."

Maria, apologizing for her want of ability to render the subject interesting, began with Candlemas day. "The feast of the purification of the blessed Virgin is a day of devotion, and is observed by the church on the second of February, to commemorate the presentation of our Lord in the temple, in compliance with the law of Moses, which ordained, that the first-born son of each family should be offered in the temple on the fortieth day, to be consecrated to the service of the altar, if he were of the tribe of Levi; if not, he was to be redeemed at a certain price. Our Saviour, therefore, and his blessed mother, in obedience to this law, though it was by no means binding on either of them, repaired to the temple on the appointed day. Jesus Christ was there acknowledged for the Messiah by holy Simeon and Anna the prophetess; and the Redeemer of the world, as a mark of his profound humility, was himself

redeemed at the regulated price. The mother of Jesus presented, according to the law for the purification of poor women, two turtle-doves or pigeons. The church recommends us on this day to visit the temple of God, and with and through Jesus Christ, to dedicate ourselves to His divine service. We ought, also, to beg the intercession of the blessed Virgin, and entreat her to recommend us to her beloved Son, and obtain for us a portion of that humility and purity with which she ever appeared before him. This festival is termed Candlemas day, from the very ancient custom of blessing candles, and distributing them to the faithful, as testimonials of a belief, that Christ is the light of the world.

“On the 24th occurs St. Matthias, the apostle, who was chosen in the place of the traitor Judas. He died in defence of the Christian faith.

“March 19th is also a day of devotion in honor of St. Joseph, spouse of the blessed Virgin, foster-father and guardian of Jesus Christ. He was of the royal house of David, but in so reduced circumstances as to be obliged to work for his daily bread, and was by trade a carpenter. He is supposed to have been about forty years of age at the time of his espousals. We may, with much confidence, commend ourselves to the protection of this saint, whose power is great with Jesus Christ; but to secure his favor, we must strive to imitate his fervent love, and his ready obedience to all the commands of God.

“We have, I believe, in March, only one day more to notice, which is the 25th,\* a holiday of obligation, to commemorate the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who, to testify his infinite love to man, vouchsafed to assume his nature, in order that he might die for his redemption. We ought, on this day, to use our utmost exertions to make a grateful return to our Lord for his merciful designs in our regard; to consider the spirit with which, as man, he performed all his actions, and take him for the model of our lives. His extreme humility should teach us to subdue our pride; and his obedience, to conquer our continual opposition to the divine will. This festival is called the Annunciation, or Lady day, because it was then announced to Mary, that she was the favored virgin, foretold by the prophet Isaiah,

\* A rescript has been issued by the pope since this article was written, agreeably to which the feast of the Annunciation, Easter-Monday, and Whi-Monday, will no longer be observed in England as holidays of obligation.

of whom should be born the Saviour of the world. Her consent being obtained by the angel Gabriel, at that instant, overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, the word was made flesh and dwelt within her. The church, in the instruction which she imparts on this festival, exhorts us to implore of the Almighty, through the powerful intercession of Mary, a share of those two virtues which raised her to the exalted dignity of Mother of God; namely, purity and humility of heart.

"Next follows the month of April, in which there are not, I think, many days particularly noticed."—"You have omitted to speak of Lent, Maria," interrupted Miss Mordaunt; "will it not be better to make a few observations on that season before you proceed further?"—"True, I had forgotten it," she answered; "perhaps you will be kind enough to enter on the subject."—"Before you begin," said Lady Harcourt, "allow me to remark, that it appears to me an injury to God, and a derogation from the merits of Jesus Christ, to ask so much of the saints—to offer to them the divine sacrifice, as you call the mass."

"Pardon me, madam," cried Frances, starting from her seat and reaching a catechism; "you are indeed misinformed; this little book will immediately refute your objections. We are here taught, that the mass is never offered but to God alone, though it is sometimes, nay, frequently, said in honor and memory of the saints; to thank God for the benefits he has bestowed upon them, and to entreat that, while we celebrate their memory here on earth; they may vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven."

"You assure me that you do not offer sacrifice to the saints," rejoined her ladyship; "I will, therefore, no longer, contest that point; but you cannot deny that you implore their aid, that you worship and almost deify them."

"I do deny that we either worship or deify them," returned Frances, with some asperity. "We honor them, indeed, with an inferior honor, as the friends and favorite servants of God; but not as gods, nor with the honor which belongs to God. I admit that we pray to them, but we do not ask them to bestow any blessing upon us as from themselves, but only to plead in our behalf with the Father of mercies, and, by their influence with him, to procure for us more easily those graces of which we stand in need. Is not reasonable to suppose, that the saints who found so

much favor with God in this life, and were so powerful both in word and work, are still more powerful in heaven? If your ladyship wished to obtain a favor of the king, to whom you were known rather by your name than by your merits, do you not think you would be more likely to succeed, if your request were made through the medium of a person dear to his majesty, than you would be by presenting your own solitary, unsupported petition? Catholics never address the saints as having any inherent power to grant their demands—they do but solicit their mediation. Your ladyship may, if you please, examine what our catechism teaches on the subject,” continued Frances, presenting the book.

“By no means, my love,” said her ladyship; “I do not doubt the truth of what you assert. It even appears reasonable to address the saints in the manner you describe, if it be probable that they can hear us, and are interested in our welfare.”

“Most assuredly they can hear us,” returned Frances; “because one of our catechisms says, in answer to that question, quoting St. Luke, ‘There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance;’ and, as we are commanded on earth to love our neighbor as ourselves, we may naturally conclude that, as charity is perfected in heaven, the saints, jealous of the triumph of Jesus Christ in the hearts of those for whom he shed his sacred blood, earnestly solicit his mercy in our behalf, when we appeal to them with humility and confidence.”

“I thank you for this explanation,” said Lady Harcourt, “and am willing to believe that it is reasonable. Protestants are greatly misinformed on this point.”—“And on many others also,” interrupted Miss Hargrave; “but the far greater number of them are to be pitied rather than blamed, because they are educated in prejudices which it is not easy to eradicate.”

“We are greatly indebted to you for your indulgence,” replied her ladyship; “and I shall accordingly, with your permission, continue to make my objections, when any doctrine is advanced contrary to my principles. I request, at the same time, that I may be opposed with candor—nay even with warmth, if my young adversaries think fit,” she continued, glancing her eye pleasantly on Frances. “I thought, my love, you intended to be silent. However,



I rather rejoice that I excited your zeal, for I should have been a loser had you kept your resolution, and your governess would have been deprived of the satisfaction of knowing, that her instructions were well bestowed. If, therefore, I have any other remarks to make, I shall apply to you to answer them."

Frances politely thanked her ladyship for the compliment, but would by no means promise to undertake the elucidation of all her doubts, lest they should be so numerous or so intricate, as to exceed her small stock of knowledge. She assured her, however, that if she said any thing against the Catholics, she should be all on fire, and so begged her to beware of the consequences.

"Now you had better begin," she continued, addressing Jane, "and do not be offended if, in the course of the dull narration, I should take a nap."

After a few good-humored remarks on the politeness of Frances, Miss Mordaunt continued :—"The reason of the institution of Lent, and the nature of fasting, having been explained before, I need not trouble you with any further observations on those points. Lent is always observed at the same season of the year. It consists of a fast of forty days, but does not invariably commence on the same day of the month. Easter day, which is determined by the age of the moon, regulates all the movable festivals of the year, as the Ascension, &c., and is always the Sunday which immediately follows the first full moon after the 21st of March. It may, accordingly, be as early as the 22d of March, or a month later. Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, is so called from the ceremony of putting ashes on the heads of the faithful."

"I have seen it performed," interrupted Lady Harcourt ; "but, in common with other Protestants, I only laugh at it. Pray, when was this custom, which I cannot help considering useless and unmeaning, introduced? You know you are not to be offended at my observations."

Frances, who did not recollect, at the moment, what answer to make, affected to be asleep. Jane smiled, and hastened to reply :—

"The observance your ladyship objects to is of primitive institution, and is adopted by the Catholic church, in imitation of the penitent Ninevites eulogized by our Saviour. The ashes are solemnly blessed, and the object of the prayers which are used for that end, is to beg for the

faithful the grace of compunction, for the remission of their sins. This pious ceremony is intended to remind us that we must die, and that, during Lent, we ought to endeavor to bring forth worthy fruits of penance. For this reason, the priest, when he applies the ashes, pronounces these words: 'Remember, man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return.' The Catholic church sanctions no unmeaning ceremonies: all her ordinances refer to some approved and holy end."

"Well, what can you say in support of a custom," resumed her ladyship, "adopted in Catholic countries, which scandalizes those who differ from your communion? I allude to the carnival; on which occasion, all persons seem to abandon themselves to dissipation, and every species of vice and folly. I am surprised that it should be endured."

"It is an abuse, madam," said Miss Hargrave, "which the *church* does not, nor ever has tolerated, as the very name of Shrovetide proves, this signifying a time appointed for confession, in order to prepare for the more exemplary observance of Lent. The evil you speak of has been introduced by worldlings, resolved to indulge their passions and their love of pleasure, although at the sacrifice of their conscience. It has ever been loudly condemned by the clergy, and discouraged by all pious Christians, as a practice directly repugnant to the spirit of the church, which exhorts all her children to conduct themselves in a very different manner; urging them to endeavor, by their prayers and good example, to stem the torrent of iniquity, which the enemy of mankind causes to overflow at that time."

Lady Harcourt made no further remark, and Miss Mor-daunt resumed:—"During the holy season of Lent, we ought not only to observe the abstinence from food which the church enjoins, but likewise to enter into her spirit, by refraining from idle visits, parties of pleasure, and every description of dangerous amusement. But, above all, her earnest desire is, that we avoid sin: from this fast, neither age, sickness nor circumstances can obtain for us a dispensation. We are exhorted, at this penitential time, to redeem our iniquities by alms-deeds, and bestow on the poor what we retrench from our superfluities. I shall proceed, now, to Passion Sunday, which is the fifth Sunday of Lent, and is so called because the church then begins to commemorate, in a more especial manner, the sufferings and death of her divine spouse. On this account, the

crucifixes and pictures are covered, and they remain so till Holy Saturday. Next follows Palm Sunday, so named from the custom of blessing palms, and distributing them to the faithful. This ceremony was instituted to commemorate our Saviour's entrance into Jerusalem, six days before his passion, when he was met by the common people, who strewed the way with their garments, and with boughs of trees, carrying branches also in their hands, and saluting him with acclamations of joy."

"You say common people," interrupted Teresa; "were there no rich persons among those who went to meet him?"—"None that we read of. The humble manner in which he entered Jerusalem was little calculated to attract the notice of rank and opulence, which are seldom interested by any thing that has the appearance of poverty. It was to show his contempt of the parade and vain honors of the world, that our Saviour chose to make his public entry into the capital of the east, riding on an ass (which we consider the most despicable of animals), and accompanied only by the poor and illiterate. But the same populace, which received the Messiah with joyful acclamations on this day, as eagerly cried out, a short time afterwards, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' The church, on this solemnity, teaches us, that we should not place too much reliance on our virtuous dispositions and our zeal for religion, when unexposed to the assaults of temptation; but, mistrusting ourselves, should continually implore the grace of God to support us in the time of trial, lest, depending on our own feeble strength, we desert his standard in the hour of danger.

"The last week of Lent is called Holy Week, because the church is then employed, with more than ordinary devotion, in contemplating the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. Maundy-Thursday is so named from the Latin word 'Mandatum,' the beginning of the Antiphon (*Mandatum novum do vobis, I give you a new commandment*), which is used in the ceremony of washing the people's feet, in imitation of Christ's washing the feet of the apostles. It was towards the close of this day, when our divine Redeemer was on the eve of entering on his passion, that, having supped with his apostles, he instituted the most holy sacrament of the altar. The church, therefore, on this occasion, interrupts, in some measure, her mournful solemnities, to celebrate this joyful event. Instead of purple,

her ministers are clothed in white, and the 'Gloria in excelsis,' which had been omitted during Lent, is recited or sung in the masses of this day. But her triumph is of short duration, as she is quickly called upon to lament the approaching death of her sacred spouse; and accordingly, as soon as the 'Gloria' is finished, the bells cease to ring, and are heard no more till Holy Saturday. When mass is ended, the altars are uncovered, and all signs of jubilation disappear."

"Do you not mistake?" said Lady Harcourt. "I have entered some of your chapels on the afternoon of Maundy-Thursday, and found them decorated with flowers and a profusion of lights."—"Your ladyship is correct," rejoined Miss Mordaunt, "and I will explain the reason. On Good Friday, the divine sacrifice is not offered, because the church is then in tears for the death of her Lord; and, therefore, at the mass on Maundy-Thursday, two Hosts are consecrated, one of which is reserved for the communion of the priest on the following day. A place apart from the altar, when such can be conveniently obtained, and which we term a sepulchre, is adorned in the manner you describe. To this spot, the blessed sacrament is respectfully carried, and it remains there till required by the officiating priest on Good Friday."

"Holy Thursday is quite a busy day among the Catholics, both in London and abroad," said her ladyship; "the people are all in motion, hurrying along from church to church, to ascertain, I suppose, which is the prettiest."—"That is not the motive which should, and I trust it is not that which does, influence Catholics generally in their visits to different altars. Our intention ought to be, to honor our Lord in this sacrament of his love, where he annihilates himself, as it were, for our salvation. The church exhorts her children, at this period, not so much to occupy themselves in making reparation to Jesus for the injuries done to him in this sacrament, as to contemplate him in the different stages of his passion. She invites us to accompany him, step by step, in the multiplied sufferings he endured, from his bitter agonies in the garden of Olives to his last expiring pang on the cross. We ought, if possible, to receive the holy communion on this day, in sentiments of thanksgiving for its institution, and in memory of the passion and death of our divine Redeemer, who, as a sweet

testimonial of his love, has bequeathed to his church this most consoling sacrament.

"It is almost needless to make any observations on Good Friday, as all Christians are aware that it is the day on which is commemorated the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, who was put to death by the Jews on Mount Calvary, in the thirty-third year of his age. The precise time of his death was foretold by the prophet Daniel. Herod was king of Judea, and Pontius Pilate the Roman governor. This solemnity is always observed on the Friday which immediately precedes the festival of Easter, and is called *Good Friday*, on account of the immense benefits which accrued to mankind from the death of Jesus Christ on this day. After the greatest indignity had been offered to our Saviour, in the unjust judgment that was passed against him, after he had endured excessive torments, and been insultingly rejected by the very people whom he came to save, he was cruelly nailed to the cross, and suspended thereon for the space of three hours, in the most inconceivable agony. During that time, namely, from twelve o'clock till three, the sun, as if ashamed to countenance the barbarity which had been exercised on so holy and exalted a personage, totally withdrew his light, and unexpected darkness covered the earth. After our divine Redeemer had hung bleeding on the cross till the ninth hour, he uttered a loud cry, saying, 'All is finished.' He then expired, yielding his most pure soul into the hands of his eternal Father. At this awful moment, the earth was shaken to its centre, the vail of the temple (a curtain which separated the sanctuary from the other parts of the building) was rent in two, rocks were split, and graves opened. All these prodigies announced the wonderful work which had been wrought for the redemption of man.

"The church instructs her children to employ themselves, this day, in serious meditation on the passion and death of Christ. She exhorts them to lament and weep for their sins, which were the cause of his sufferings; and to resolve on the amendment of their lives, without which, the blood of Jesus, shed for them on Mount Calvary, will be unavailable to their salvation. The mass of this day is called the 'mass of the presanctified.'"

"Is this all you propose to say on the subject of Good Friday?" asked Lady Harcourt, when Jane had ceased speaking.—"It was not my design," she answered, "to

make any further remarks, because I was unwilling to engage your attention any longer."

"Then you have omitted one of your ceremonies, probably because you thought I should object to it. I cannot but feel sorry, that minds so well cultivated as yours, in every other particular, should be left in ignorance of the errors into which your church has fallen, and especially her idolatry in the worship of images; I allude at present to the adoration of the cross."

"You lament our ignorance! you consider us to be idolaters!" exclaimed Frances, starting from her apparent slumber; "does your ladyship really believe what you assert?"—"Certainly, my love," returned Lady Harcourt mildly, "and must continue so to believe, unless you are able to convince me that my opinions are erroneous. But I fear I have awakened angry feelings, and beg to apologize."—"It always provokes me," said Frances, "that Protestants, and others, who dissent from our creed, should pretend to understand the religion better than Catholics themselves, how well soever these may be informed. I——"

"Softly, my dear," interrupted Miss Hargrave; "endeavor to speak with more gentleness. Her ladyship asked for information, but your arguments will fail to convince, if they be guided by passion, rather than by the mild dictates of charity and reason."—"Her ladyship," rejoined Frances, "did not ask *if* we adored images. She only bewailed our ignorance and blindness in doing so: this roused my anger, but I am calm now, and beg her pardon."

Lady Harcourt accepted the apology, and Frances, on being requested by the governess to answer the objection with politeness and good humor, thus resumed the subject:—

"I must observe to your ladyship, that I do not propose to make use of any other weapons of defence, than such as are furnished by the Catholic catechism. This instructs me, that the church cannot err in faith, because Christ has promised, that He and his Holy Spirit will remain with her, and teach her all truth to the end of the world. As she cannot teach error, neither can she tolerate it; therefore, we are not guilty of idolatry, which is a crime forbidden by the first commandment. I assure your ladyship (though I have hardly patience to do so) that Catholics do not pray to images. We pray before them, indeed, to keep us from distractions, to assist us to raise our minds to

heavenly objects, but not to them; for, ignorant as Protestants imagine us to be, we have sense enough to know, that it would be useless to address our prayers to a carved image, or canvass portrait, which can neither see, nor hear, nor help us."

"Then why make use of them at all?" asked her ladyship.—"For the very same reason you would assign for wearing, suspended from your neck, the miniature which I have often observed you to take from your bosom, and fervently kiss. You would say, 'It is the memorial of a departed friend, and when I look on the picture, it forcibly reminds me of the beloved original. I many times bedew it with my tears; and though I am sensible that it cannot hear me, still, absorbed by the idea of the interesting object it represents, I frequently give utterance before it to my thoughts and lamentations.'"

"Dear Frances," interrupted Lady Harcourt, her eyes suffused with tears, "how exactly have you delineated my feelings!"—"Then no longer accuse Catholics of superstition and idolatry, in the respect they pay to the images and pictures of Christ and his saints; since we employ them only in the same manner in which your ladyship uses the miniature of your friend. They movingly remind us of the mysteries of our Saviour's passion, and the martyrdom of his saints. The honor given to them is referred to those whom they signify; so that, by the images or crosses which we kiss, and before which we kneel, we honor and adore Christ himself.

"The crucifix, in particular, is always an object of veneration (not adoration, remember) in the Catholic church, because it represents to us our blessed Saviour, and serves to recall more easily to our memory all that he did and suffered for our redemption."

"You are a powerful adversary, my dear Frances," said her ladyship smiling, "and I must not contend with you. In future, when I hear you accused of superstition and idolatry, I will look on this picture, and recollect this afternoon's conversation. I perceive that it is time to bid you farewell. When another opportunity presents itself, I shall not forget to remind you, that our discourse is to begin with the festival of Easter."

## CHAPTER XLII.

"MAMMA, what do you think of the two Harcourts?" inquired Teresa, after those young ladies quitted the Park, where they had been spending a fortnight; "I do not like them," she continued, without waiting for her mother's answer; "they are so satirical, that they find fault with every body, and were quite displeased with Maria, because she would not join in the laugh against some persons whom they were exhibiting in a ridiculous point of view. They are great mimics, very inquisitive, and so fond of talking about all their acquaintances, that no person's character is safe in their hands."

"They are still very agreeable companions," interrupted Frances, "and though I admit that they sometimes speak rather uncharitably, I am persuaded they do not mean any harm. Their lively discourse, anecdotes of eccentric characters, and playful mimicry, often made us laugh, and you, who now complain of them, appeared to be highly amused."—"Why, yes," returned Teresa, coloring; "but my conscience reproved me; I knew they did wrong, though I had not, like Maria, the courage to tell them so. Jane, you may recollect, was seldom with us, and consequently, there were only you and I to notice them. I am glad they are gone; the sermon we heard this morning, on detraction and its consequences, has quite alarmed me, and I am determined to be more watchful over my tongue for the future."

"Oh! you are mighty scrupulous just now," said Frances; "if you indulge this humor long, you will become very stupid company. A little harmless raillery gives spirit to conversation, and, I must own, does not displease me."—"That is to say," returned Teresa quickly, "when you are not the object. It is possible that, long before this, we have been caricatured half a dozen times."—"You judge those ladies unfairly," retorted Frances, with some warmth; "you know what professions of friendship they made us, and why should you doubt their sincerity? I do not conceive *we* have any reason to fear their ridicule, because it is not usual to point the arrow at those whom we regard as our friends."

"Provided that mimics and detractors," said Jane. "are



capable of so refined a sentiment as friendship.”—“I judge,” resumed Teresa, “merely from their own observation. Amelia assured us, that Lady Belinda French, and the Hon. Mrs. Spicer, were among the number of their dearest friends; yet they gave the nickname of Lady Gadfly to the one, and that of Mrs. Gossip to the other. They turned all their peculiarities into ridicule, told us every anecdote they could recollect, whether to their credit or not, and then begged that we would not repeat a syllable of what we had heard, lest, said they, it should reach the ears, and hurt the feelings, of these valued friends. These ladies would be sadly vexed if they knew all that has been said about them. Lady Belinda is such——”

“Stop, Teresa,” interrupted her mother, who had hitherto been silent, “you were desired not to repeat what you had heard.”—“But only to you, mamma.”—“Not even to me, my love, since they are never likely to become your companions. I am acquainted with the ladies you have named, and do not wish that the tongue of slander should lessen them in my esteem. You asked my opinion of our late guests; but, without waiting to hear it, you have drawn their portrait yourself in such colors, as to excite my extreme disapprobation of their conduct. Reflect, I beseech you, on the consequences, if prejudice, envy or ill-nature has urged you to an unjust description of their character; they certainly did not appear to me in the unfavorable light in which you have represented them. Beware lest you commit the very fault which you stigmatize in others. What says Maria?”

“I am sorry you have appealed to me, mamma,” answered Miss Alton. “I cannot defend one party, without reflecting on the other; allow me to continue silent”—“Your silence, Maria,” exclaimed Teresa, bursting into tears, “will be unkind; it will condemn me, because, as mamma thinks better of the Harcourts than we have reason to do, she may conclude, that I have been telling an untruth. I wish I had not mentioned their names.”—“It is often much easier to be silent,” observed Lady Alton, looking sternly at Teresa, “than to know where to stop, when once we have begun.”

Teresa’s tears flowed afresh, at the idea of being thought capable of uttering a wilful falsehood, and, throwing her arms round Maria, entreated her to speak in her justification.—“As far as I am competent to judge,”

said the cautious Maria, "Teresa has spoken the truth; but I regret that these young ladies should suffer in your esteem on our account. I can only suggest, in extenuation of their faults, that they have not had the same religious instruction that we have, nor, perhaps, any friendly monitor, to convince them of the impropriety of their conduct. Dry your tears, Teresa," she continued, addressing the afflicted girl; "it is well, I think, that mamma should be informed, because she can point out to us the means of avoiding similar errors; but do not speak of them to any one else, since we must not allow in ourselves the reprehensible practices which we censure in others."

"I am not angry with you, my child," said Lady Alton, giving Teresa an affectionate embrace, "I am not angry, as I find you have spoken only the truth. I will, however, take occasion to remark, that, when our neighbor's reputation is at stake, the mere revealing of the truth frequently becomes detraction, and, therefore, it must not be divulged without necessity. In the present instance, I exonerate you from blame, because children should never conceal from parents, or those who are intrusted with their education, the faults they discover in their companions, lest they should be of such a nature as to corrupt their minds. But then this disclosure must be made without malice or exaggeration, and only through a love of virtuous principles.

"Obliged, in our commerce with the world, to associate with persons whose inclinations and pursuits are different from our own, we should be careful to let our actions be so guided by divine and fraternal charity that we may avoid giving wilful offence to either God or our neighbor. This object we shall never accomplish, unless we keep a strict guard over the tongue. The defects you have noticed in the daughters of Lady Harcourt are unfortunately but too common, and I am sorry, my dear Frances, that you should extol these young ladies as being pleasant companions, on no better principles, than because they amuse you at the expense of their neighbors' reputation. You assert, that a little *harmless* raillery gives spirit to conversation. This may be very true, and, as long as it preserves that character, it is undoubtedly innocent; but alas! the gradation from that which is purely indifferent, to that which may severely wound either ourselves or others, is much more easy than you imagine."

"But I cannot discover any impropriety, mamma, in

merely relating what I have been told; I am not, you are aware, in this case, the inventor of the tale; the sin, of course, lies with them.”—“Not, however, without your having a share in it. You assist in propagating the report, and causing it to be more widely diffused; many comments are made, by yourself as well as by others, on the supposed delinquency, and the reputation of a neighbor is seriously injured; are you, then, without blame? By no means. It is proper, also, to be acquainted with the character of those on whose authority you speak, lest the history of this or that person’s faults, be a mere fabrication, invented by malice, or, at least, magnified by prejudice. In such a case, you are, by spreading the calumny, the propagator of falsehood, and are obliged to restitution; a duty which it is often very difficult to perform.”—“But is there any harm,” resumed Frances, “in circulating absolute facts? Surely one may speak, and give an opinion of them.”

“Here again, my love, great circumspection and prudence are necessary. It is often difficult to ascertain the truth. Two persons of opposite dispositions may view the same action in a very different light, and put a more or less favorable construction on the motives which produced it. The detractor, it may be added, seldom shows any other than the dark side of the picture; and one story, you are aware, often appears plausible till the other is told. A look, a gesture, a surmise, added to the truth, is often sufficient to give a deeper tinge of coloring, and, in the eye of malevolence, to convert a mere oversight into a crime. It is a breach of charity, then, to repeat what we hear, as often as it may serve to diminish the reputation of another, with persons who were before unacquainted with his failings. If these be of magnitude, and likely to cause scandal, we must not dare to speak of them, but use our utmost endeavors to prevent the circulation.”

“I wish every one was as particular on this subject as you are, mamma,” said Frances; “and then I should never be induced to form a judgment, or utter an expression, contrary to charity.”

“Particular as you think me,” resumed her ladyship, “I still fear I shall have much to answer for, since we are accountable for every idle word.”

“Well, it is very difficult,” said Frances, “to observe this nicety; nay, it seems almost impossible not to advance

an opinion, when one hears people spoken of. It is almost equally so to find conversation, without making our acquaintance the subject of it."

"But we need not speak ill of them," observed Maria.— "Not necessarily," replied Frances; "but, you know, some people are of so censorious a disposition, that they put an unfavorable construction on every thing they see or hear. You need only mention a person's name, and you have half an hour's dissertation on his defects."

"When we are aware that this is likely to happen," observed Lady Alton, "we must carefully avoid giving the discourse any turn that may lead to a topic so injurious to ourselves and others."

"How injurious to ourselves, mamma?" said Frances. "Can I not even listen to the conversation of the detractor, without incurring the guilt?"—"Not without contracting a portion of it, if you lend a willing ear to the envenomed detail, and excite further animadversion, by asking questions from motives of curiosity, rather than from a desire to defend the accused."

"I fear it will be difficult, mamma, in our intercourse with the world," said Maria, "always to shun the company of the detractor, or of those persons, at least, who allow themselves to censure very freely the actions of their neighbors, when they conceive that they have been injured by them."

"True, my love, it is indeed difficult; but by imposing silence on our tongue, and burying what we hear in the recesses of our own heart, not dwelling upon, but endeavoring even to forget, what we have learned to the prejudice of others, we shall, with the grace of God, possess our souls in peace, and avoid many troubles and disputes. People feel but little pleasure in conversing with those who neither seem interested in, nor amused by, their conversation. If our hearts are charitably inclined, detraction will ever be painful to us, and we shall show, by our silence, that we disapprove of that which we have not authority to prevent. Thus, railers and detractors will be foiled in their attempt to make us join in their malevolent practices, and we shall be entitled to the consoling promises of Jesus Christ, who has assured us, that if we judge not, we shall not be judged, and that if we condemn not, we shall not be condemned."

"It will be much better, Frances, to submit to the mortification of being called a stupid companion, than to

obtain the character of an agreeable one, by indulging in the pernicious and too prevailing habit of detraction. If the understanding be cultivated, and the mind stored with useful knowledge, you will seldom experience a deficiency of conversation, when a proper subject is introduced. The Almighty has never imposed on his creatures any command which his grace could not enable them to fulfil. Do not, therefore, encourage the supposition that it is impossible to keep the eighth commandment, more than any other. I admit that it is repugnant to our perverse nature to be thus always on our guard, and especially so to those persons who allow themselves the liberty of giving utterance to all they think, who lay little or no restraint on their passions, and who are ever on the alert to hear news. Question produces answer; and when once an eager curiosity is excited, it is difficult to restrain it. We are not answerable for the misdeeds of others, except inasmuch as they may have been influenced by us. What right, then, have we to pry into their actions, publish their secrets, and, viewing their conduct through the medium of passion or prejudice, boldly condemn their motives, without allowing them an opportunity to justify them?"

"That is indeed unkind," said Frances, after a moment's pause; "and I will endeavor for the future, to be more watchful over my words. But when the faults of a person are notoriously public, I conclude that I may be allowed to mention them. As his reputation is already lost, I can inflict on him no further injury. I do not, however, allude to those who have been condemned in a court of justice."

"Then, my love, I am persuaded that no others should be considered public. The evil actions which have not been subjected to a judicial investigation are known, in the first instance, to a comparatively small circle; and to this they would probably be restricted, did not the tongue of slander spread far and wide the baneful intelligence. Let us avoid this fault, for such it certainly is, lest we cause those who hear us to transgress the law of God, by exciting in them uncharitable sentiments towards persons, of whom they have hitherto had no reason to think unfavorably. Make it a general rule, my dear children, never to repeat the remarks you hear, if they are capable of being turned to the disadvantage of those who were the objects of them. Thus, if the current of scandal and

defamation cannot be effectually stopped, it will, at least, find a barrier in you, and be obliged to force its way through another channel. Your name will not be called in question, and, in your journey through life, you will be spared a great deal of mental uneasiness; you will have few enemies, and no quarrels. And though you should be considered insipid companions, by those who make it their chief business to pry into and expose the imperfections of others, you will enjoy within yourself an approving conscience, and a peace of mind, which the world can neither give nor take away."

"But is it your opinion," said Maria, "that every one who reports the faults of another, does so from a malicious motive?"—"No, my love, far be from me so uncharitable a thought; there are, accordingly, various degrees of criminality. Great talkers, who are in the habit of repeating all they hear, and others, who speak without considering what they say, may be guilty of detraction, without any malicious design; but whether the consequence be or be not equally fatal, depends much on the character of the persons to whom such discourse is addressed."

"Is it not very wrong, mamma," interrupted Teresa, "to carry stories backward and forward?"—"There cannot be a more dangerous practice," returned her ladyship; "and, in order to prove it, I will briefly relate an occurrence, which I witnessed a few days ago. I shall not, however, mention names, nor give any indication by which the parties may be recognized."

"Walking with your papa through the village, we were attracted towards a house, whence proceeded some very discordant sounds as of persons in high dispute. On our approach, we remarked two decent-looking women, who were so completely engaged as neither to see nor hear us. During the few seconds we waited at the door, and before any interval occurred to enable us to make ourselves known, we heard the following dialogue:—"What a worthless woman you must be to say so many unkind things, and which, you know, are untrue. You say I am extravagant—you say I drink."—"Tis false!" retorted the other; "I never said any such thing; but if I had, it would have been only what you deserved for all the mischief your girl has made in my family. Besides, I have proof for what I say. Mary——saw the bottle on the table, and followed Tom to ask what he had fetched for you."—"What mischief has

my girl made or could make, among your quarrelsome brats ?' said the angry mother, regardless of the accusation which concerned herself. 'My child never did harm to any one, and you would give your ears if yours were like her. Your infamous tricks nearly lost her the needlework at the parsonage, but she has got it in spite of you : a good character prevailed over malice. She shall, however, never darken your doors again.'—'The seldomer the better,' returned her antagonist ; 'she is a perfect hypocrite, and I was never so deceived in a character in all my life. I wish I had never known her.'—'Woman,' said the insulted mother, who, I perceived, was the injured party, 'how dare you to call my child by the odious name of hypocrite ? What do you mean to insinuate ?'—'Only that I find she is no better than other folks,' was the cool reply. 'The character you prize so highly has not a solid foundation. I have heard more than I choose to tell.'—'Out of my sight, you worthless calumniator !' exclaimed the mother, bursting into a passion of tears. 'You want to ruin a poor widow, and her orphan child. What malicious fiend has thus prejudiced you against us ? Depend on it, I'll be revenged.'—'No, mother,' said a mild voice that proceeded from an inner apartment, 'do not threaten vengeance. God will defend the innocent : leave it to him.'—'Oh, you are there, madam, are you ? Why don't you come forward, and show yourself ? Are you ashamed to face me ?'

"Here a momentary pause ensued, and your papa availed himself of it, to inquire into the cause of these uncharitable recriminations. Startled at the voice, they instantly turned to the door, and, requesting us to enter, each began to justify her conduct. It is unnecessary to relate all that passed ; we were there nearly an hour, and at length succeeded in restoring peace."

"What was the origin of the quarrel, mamma ?" said Maria.—"It was caused, my love, by an unprincipled woman, who had ingratiated herself, by means of servile and officious civility, into the favor of these two families. She was partly a stranger to them ; but her agreeable manners having won their confidence, they entertained her kindly, little imagining that they fostered a viper, which would speedily sting them to the quick. Margaret, the widow's daughter, a discreet and virtuous young woman, about twenty years of age, soon perceived that their new

acquaintance had an unfortunate propensity to criticize and blame the conduct of others. Not doubting that every hasty expression uttered in her own family, would be immediately repeated, she cautioned her mother to be always on her guard before her. This admonition had the desired effect, and things went on quietly as usual. At length, however, the loquacious tale-bearer, provoked at the studied reserve of the widow, and the taciturnity of Margaret, whenever the faults of their neighbors became the subject of discourse, and envying likewise the confidence which was reposed in them by all around, determined to undermine their happiness. In this malignant scheme, she was assisted by one who was jealous of the preference often given to Margaret, whose dutiful and prudent conduct was frequently pointed out for her imitation. But to succeed in injuring characters so well established, it was necessary to proceed with wariness, and without manifesting their evil design. They at length accomplished their purpose by insinuating, that the widow and her daughter were subject, like others, to the frailties of human nature, and appeared to be, on a closer acquaintance, not more excellent than their neighbors. As Mary was known to be intimate with them, her opinion was frequently asked; and she delivered it in terms so ambiguous, as generally to leave an unfavorable impression."

"But, mamma," said Frances, "was there no one to take the part of these injured people?"—"There would have been many, my love, had this worthless woman spoken without disguise; but that would have defeated her object. She did not wish to lose their good-will, because she was always kindly received by them, and entertained in the best manner their circumstances would admit. The widow was fond of her; and Margaret, though she seemed to suspect, still treated her with civility. Artifice, therefore, supplied the place of open warfare. In actions which could not be blamed, the motive was called in question. Their judicious economy was represented as the effect of avarice; their prudence, in not giving ear to the recital of their neighbors' faults, was described to be the result of selfish feelings. Their neatness was stigmatized as pride, their readiness to oblige was said to emanate from interested motives, and their attention to the duties of religion was condemned as sheer hypocrisy. When once these insinuations were established, and their good character was



tarnished by the pestiferous breath of calumny, it was no longer difficult to cause dissension among their friends and acquaintance.

"The whispers of the village were communicated to Margaret and her mother, who wondered at them, from a conviction that they were groundless. The former remained silent; but from the latter, who was less guarded, they sometimes extorted an answer, which was carried by the tale-bearer to the parties concerned, though without any allusion to the excitement which had produced it. This elicited observations still more malicious; which were eagerly carried back. Thus, many individuals, who had hitherto lived together on terms of the greatest civility, were disunited, mutual confidence was destroyed, and Almighty God was grievously offended."

"But these were common people, mamma," observed Frances; "those who are better bred would not carry dissension to such extremity."

"I am sorry to be obliged to allow, my dear Frances," said her ladyship, "that the faults under consideration pervade all ranks. Happy would it be, were scandal, detraction, calumny and tale-bearing confined to the ignorant. That this is not the case, you possess abundant proof in the conversations you have had with the Misses Harcourt. The tale-bearer, whatever be her condition in life, is a pest to society. Wherever she sets her foot, discord accompanies her; revenge, anger, hatred and falsehood follow in her train. Peace flies affrighted from the habitation she enters, and lasting animosities are too frequently the consequences of her visits. Let me, then, exhort you to be constantly on your guard against the encroachments of so destructive a vice. Never, for an instant, tolerate it in yourselves, or encourage it in those with whom you associate. Repress the desire to learn what is spoken of you by others, for it is pregnant with many dangers: endeavor to secure the consoling approbation of your conscience, and leave the world to say what it will. Without expecting to escape censure altogether, be very solicitous not to deserve it. In all your actions, keep this great moral precept in view; 'never to do to others what you would not wish to have done to you.' The observance of this just rule will ensure you the blessings of peace with your neighbor, but its violation is inevitably followed by a multitude of evils."

"What have you to say of mimicry, mamma?" interrupted Frances, smiling on her mother. "It amused me in Christina Harcourt; but I expect that your severe morality will condemn it."—"Assuredly I condemn it, my love," answered her ladyship, "and on the principle of its being opposed to the golden rule, 'Do as you would be done by.' It is a talent of most pernicious tendency; and, instead of being laughed at, and even encouraged in children, as it too frequently is, ought to be severely reprehended, and checked on its first appearance. The mimic spares neither friend nor enemy. Defects and harmless eccentricities, which would otherwise be unheeded, are pointed out with unfeeling malevolence; nay, even the practices of religion and virtue are not allowed to escape. Parents, relations, instructors, are, by turns, indiscriminately attacked and caricatured. I have not, hitherto, my dear children, discovered in any of you this unamiable propensity, and I earnestly entreat you to guard against it. Never suffer the example or persuasion of others, to induce you to commit so great a breach of Christian charity, nor tempt you to assume the despicable character of a buffoon."

"I will be careful, mamma," said Teresa, "not to become a mimic, for fear I should contract the follies I meant to ridicule."—"Oh, you purpose to be a paragon of excellence!" interrupted Frances, gaily; "beware, lest you raise your edifice of perfection too high, my good little sister, and be compelled, on discovering that it does not suit the taste of those with whom you mix in the world, to reduce it to the common standard."

"If her edifice of perfection, as you term it," said Lady Alton, "be constructed on any other foundation than that of humility, it will fall of itself, and not need the ill example of others to involve it in ruin. We must not, however, permit the influence of the world to deter us from the choice of a devout life, but labor assiduously to effect our salvation, regardless of the remarks to which our conduct may give rise. Teresa is to be commended for forming good resolutions, and she must beg the assistance of God that she may be enabled to persevere in them. St. Ambrose and St. Gregory, speaking of the mischief which is caused by the intemperance of the tongue, exhort us to observe silence in order to avoid this evil."

"But must we, then, be always silent?" asked Frances. —"Certainly not," replied her ladyship; "for the 'virtue of silence,' continue the same saints, 'consists not so much in not speaking at all, as in speaking and being silent at proper times. There is,' they say, using the words of Ecclesiasticus, 'a time to be silent, and a time to talk.' Thus, it is necessary to use discretion, both with the one and the other. For a person may fail as much in not speaking when he ought, as in speaking when he ought not to speak. 'But these two things,' they add, 'are pointed out to us in the royal psalmist: Set, O Lord, a guard to my mouth, and a gate to my lips to close them.' 'David,' says St. Gregory, 'did not ask of God to raise a wall before them, that he might never open them, but only to place there a door; and as a door is made to be opened and shut when necessary, he gives us to understand thereby, that we ought also to open and shut the mouth, as occasion requires, since in that consists the essential virtue of silence. The wise man in Ecclesiasticus asks of God the same thing. 'Who will place,' says he, 'a guard to my mouth, and a seal of wisdom on my lips, that they may not cause me to fall, and that my tongue may not be my destruction?'"

"There are so many circumstances, so many conditions requisite, to speak with prudence, that it is not without reason that the wise man fears, lest his tongue should cause his destruction, and that he begs of God the discernment which is necessary to open and shut it at proper times. To fail in one only circumstance in speaking, often suffices to constitute a great fault; whereas, to speak prudently, and as we ought, it is essential that all the circumstances agree, and that none be omitted. There is this difference between good and evil, that, for a moral action to be good, it is necessary that *all* the requisite conditions concur at the same time; whereas, to render an action evil, to fail in *one* only is sufficient.' Having thus learned, my dear children, how circumspect you must be in alluding to the faults of your neighbor, let it be your study to merit the eulogium of St. James, who says, that 'he who sins not by the tongue is a perfect man.'"

"I hope we shall profit by your kind instruction, my dear madam," said Jane, "and never involve ourselves in disputes, or incur the reproaches of our conscience,

by any breach of charity towards those with whom we associate."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Maria, "there is the bell; it wants but a quarter to three. I did not suppose it was near so late."

"Neither did I," said Frances. "Mamma has the talent to render her remarks, at all times, agreeable, although the subject be uninteresting, or strongly opposed to my feelings."

"Your attention, my dear Frances, deserves praise, and your visible improvement in piety and amiable manners fully compensates the anxiety you formerly caused me. Adieu, I am going into the chapel; you will follow in time for vespers."

"May we not accompany you?" was the general request. "Certainly," answered her ladyship, "provided you will not consider a quarter of an hour too long to spend in the chapel before the service begins; for, you know, I do not like you to converse or to stare about at those who enter."

"I will employ the time, mamma," said Teresa, "in begging of Almighty God to make me as wise and good as you are."

"And I," said Frances, "in praying that my chattering tongue may not prove my destruction."

"Let us all pray, my dear children, that we may answer the great end for which we were created, which is to love God with our whole hearts in this life, and enjoy him for eternity in the next."

An affectionate embrace was the signal of permission, and each struggled to obtain an arm of their beloved mother, whose eyes beamed delight, and glistened with the tear of gratitude, as she silently returned thanks to Heaven for the blessings which surrounded her.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

"My dear young friends," said Lady Harcourt, entering the school-room, "you will be tired of hearing my voice; but, having an hour or two unoccupied, I am come to exact the fulfilment of your promise with regard to the festivals of your church. I assure you, the information

you have already given has not been useless, as I have defended the Catholic cause against a host of foes, and felt highly gratified by the superior knowledge I possessed.

"During the Christmas holidays, I could not think of asking you to converse on serious topics; but now that you are again attending to your customary employments, I venture to renew my solicitation."

"I am sorry to learn that we are shortly to lose the pleasure of your ladyship's society," said Miss Alton. "I understand you leave us next week."

"Decidedly," answered Lady Harcourt; "I am ashamed of having already intruded so long. But there are so many attractives at Alton, that when once I set my foot within your hospitable mansion, I am, as it were, riveted to the spot, and quit it with the utmost reluctance. I here find cheerfulness without levity, charity without ostentation, and piety without disguise, or affected display. No sounds of discord ever strike upon my ear in this abode of peace, and every countenance looks pleased and happy. If any consideration could induce me to become a Catholic, it would be the manner in which I see the duties of that religion fulfilled here, and the effect which it produces. Every circumstance in the behavior of your amiable parents announces the fervent Christian; yet their unobtrusive piety is offensive to no one, and their actions never contradict their professions."

The eyes of the young ladies overflowed with tears of filial affection, on hearing this eulogium on their beloved parents. Lady Harcourt, perceiving their emotion, changed the subject, but not without exhorting them to follow the advice, and walk constantly in the footsteps, of their excellent mother.

"Will you now, my dear Miss Alton," resumed her ladyship, "favor me with the information I require? I think we are to begin with Easter Sunday."

"Your ladyship cannot be ignorant of the nature of this great festival," said Maria; "because the subject of it forms one of the leading articles of the Christian faith. Allow me, therefore, to decline the honor you intend me, of considering myself your instructress, and to refer you to my dear mamma, or my governess, either of whom is so much better qualified to give the explanation you wish for."

"I can by no means dispense with your engagement"

said Lady Harcourt, laughing : “ remember, you all promised to increase my stock of knowledge on this head, when I should introduce the question. My friend Frances will, no doubt, be on the watch to oppose my heterodox opinions ; but I shall hear with pleasure whatever she has to advance.” —“ Provided it be said with temper,” remarked the governess. Frances smiled, and declared that she could not promise. The preliminaries being adjusted, Miss Alton apologized for her want of talents, and thus began :—

“ After our divine Redeemer had been taken from the cross, and his sacred body laid in the tomb, the public seal was placed thereon, and a guard of soldiers sent to keep watch, lest his disciples should remove the body, and say that he was risen. Vain precaution ! The very measures they adopted to prevent, served but to confirm, the so much-dreaded prodigy, and to render its certainty the more indubitable. The morning of the third day dawned ; and Jesus, uniting his most holy soul to his sacred body, clothed it with immortality, and, by the power of the divinity, raised it from the grave. Thus invested with the attributes of a spiritual body, he quitted the tomb unperceived by the guard ; but a tremendous earthquake announced to them this great event. Overwhelmed with fear, they fell as men struck dead ; and, when sufficiently recovered to move and speak, proclaimed aloud the wonders they had witnessed, till they were bribed to silence, and commanded to declare that, while they reposed, his disciples stole the body.

“ It is to commemorate this triumph of the Son of God over his enemies, this evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ, in the fulfilment of his promise, that the Christian church has established this festival. We are exhorted to testify our joy, that the sufferings of Jesus Christ are at an end, and that he has mercifully effected for us a complete redemption. And, in order to show our gratitude for this signal benefit, we should endeavor to imitate his resurrection by renouncing sin, and entering on a new life, with a firm determination never wilfully to relapse again.”

“ Why is ‘ Alleluia ’ so often pronounced at this time ? ” said Teresa.—“ Because,” answered Maria, “ it is a word expressive of exultation, and signifies ‘ Praise ye the Lord ! ’ The church, therefore, makes frequent use of it at this joyful season, and wishes her children to do the same. As all have abundant reason to glorify God for the benefits of

the redemption, wrought by our divine Lord, so all ought frequently and fervently to repeat this devout act of praise. The glorious resurrection of Jesus confirms our faith and hope, that we also shall rise again in our bodies at the day of judgment. Now, Teresa, suppose you explain the next festival."

"I recollect," said Teresa, pleased at being called on to take a part in the conversation, "that the next holiday is the Ascension—a movable feast, dependent on the time of Easter. It always falls on a Thursday, is forty days after the resurrection, and is kept to commemorate the day on which our Saviour ascended into heaven. By the instructions which have been given me, I learn, that Christ conversed so many days on earth with his disciples, in order to confirm them in the truth of his resurrection, to augment their courage, remove their incredulity, and impart to them further directions for the preaching of his gospel. On the fortieth day, after having led them to Mount Olivet, comforting them with many promises, he gave them his blessing, and, raising himself towards heaven, a cloud at length concealed him from their view. Two angels then appeared to the ravished but afflicted spectators of this glorious sight, and declared to them, that the Son of God would return to judge the world on the last day, in the same visible manner in which they had seen him ascend."

Teresa now paused, and, appealing to Jane, requested her to supply what was deficient.—"You have not left me much to add," returned that young lady; "I will, however, observe, that the Ascension completes all the wonderful mysteries which relate to Jesus Christ in the redemption of man. By it he opened the gates of heaven to us, which otherwise had been eternally closed, and gave entrance to all the blessed spirits who, from the time of Adam, had been continually sighing after this happy moment. We are instructed, on this occasion, to raise our hearts and our thoughts to heaven, instead of fixing them on earthly goods, the possession of which is so uncertain and so insufficient to render us happy; to adore Jesus Christ in heaven as our Mediator and Advocate; to rejoice in his glory, and to beg a share in the blessing which he bestowed on his apostles. In conclusion, we ought to encourage ourselves to serve God faithfully, in the hope of obtaining a seat in that glorious kingdom, of which our Redeemer

took possession this day in our name, and in which he has promised to confer on us an immortal crown, if we here correspond to the inspirations of his grace. The feast of the Ascension always follows the three Rogation days."

"What do you mean by the Rogation days?" asked Lady Harcourt; "I believe they are noticed in the calendar, but I am not acquainted with their import."

"They are days appointed by the church," resumed Jane, "to be employed in solemn public prayer to the Almighty, to implore his blessing on the fruits of the earth, and his divine protection against plague, famine and other disasters. The litanies of the saints are recited or sung; and in Catholic countries, this takes place in a procession of the inhabitants of each parish. The custom is very ancient; for in the fifth century, the diocese of St. Mamerthus, bishop of Vienne, being grievously afflicted by earthquakes, fires, and the ravages of wild beasts, he ordered public supplication to be made to Heaven for a cessation of these evils. Almighty God heard the prayers of his suffering people, and, from that time, the calamity ceased. These days were, therefore, appointed to be observed annually in that district, and, by degrees, the custom became universal.

"The reason that we are not obliged to fast, but only to abstain, on these penitential days, is, because they occur during the pascal time, when the church did not usually enjoin strict fasting. Though we are not obliged to hear mass on these days, yet, as we are all interested in the blessings which the church petitions for, we ought, undoubtedly, to join our fervent prayers to hers; and this we are exhorted to do, lest we should be excluded from the benefit of them."\*

"I approve of this observance," said Lady Harcourt, "and think it a pity that it should have fallen into disuse among us; for if we continued this pious practice, it might tend to disarm the anger of God, which seems to show itself in the numberless suicides, frequency of sudden death, and rapid increase of crime."

"But Almighty God does not compel people to be wicked, nor cause them to kill themselves," observed Teresa, "though he may send earthquakes, storms, and other calamities."—"No, my little monitor," resumed her lady-



ship; "but do not mistake me. I am perfectly convinced, that the Almighty neither tempts men to be wicked, nor approves of their misdeeds; but when they have abandoned his service, and repeatedly forfeited his grace by guilt unrepented of, it is probable that his slighted mercy may give place to justice, and that the sinner, thus forsaken by God, and given up to the suggestions of the devil and of his own passions, may become capable of every crime. This is, of course, a dreadful evil, and as much to be apprehended as famine or the sword; and still more so, if we consider it in a religious point of view. But even in a moral sense, the increase of crime is greatly to be lamented, because it destroys the bonds of society, causing man to prey upon man, and often entailing wretchedness upon the innocent and well-disposed. It is on examining the subject in this light, that I regard the frequency of crime as a mark of God's anger towards his people. It is, therefore, the interest of all to reform themselves, and to pray earnestly for the reformation of others. I will not, however, interrupt you any longer."

Miss Mordaunt then resumed. "April the twenty-third is a day of devotion, in honor of St. George, the ancient patron of England. He was a soldier of rank under the emperor Dioclesian. After he had boldly declared himself a Christian, and endured severe torments in defence of his faith, he was beheaded. He is generally represented in the act of killing a dragon, being supposed to have destroyed one that did great mischief in the places it frequented. St. George was a native of Cappadocia, and suffered martyrdom about the year 290.

"The twenty-fifth of April is the feast of St. Mark, which, like the Rogation days, is a day of abstinence and prayer.\* It was instituted by St. Gregory the Great, in thanksgiving to God, for having put a stop to a dreadful mortality which, in the year 589, afflicted Rome. The object of our devotions ought to be, to appease the anger of God, justly provoked by our sins; to obtain the blessings of Heaven on the fruits of the earth, and our preservation from contagious and pestilential disorders. Persons who are unable to be present at the public service of the church, should unite their intention to hers, and join with their families in reciting the litanies at home.

\* See note, p. 272.

"In the month of May, there are two days of devotion; viz. the commemoration of the apostles saints Philip and James, on the first; and the Invention of the Cross, on the third."

"What means the invention of the cross?" asked Lady Harcourt. "It is a festival I am not at all acquainted with, though it strikes me that it is mentioned in the almanac."

"St. Helen," resumed Miss Mordaunt, "mother to the emperor Constantine, very anxious to find the holy cross on which our Saviour was crucified, undertook a journey to Jerusalem, at an advanced age, in the hope of being able to discover it. Success attended her pious undertaking; and the true cross being found after diligent search, with the two others which were buried with it, was distinguished from them by a miracle. A church was erected on the spot; and the cross so greatly to be venerated was placed therein, in the year 326, after it had been buried by the heathens about one hundred and eighty years. It is to thank God for the recovery of this precious relic, and to celebrate the triumphs of Jesus Christ thereon, that the church has established this festival. She desires thereby to awaken in our hearts sentiments of gratitude, by reminding us that all the sufferings of our Saviour on the cross were endured for the love of us; of contrition, because our sins were the cause of those sufferings; and of humility, by laying before us the example of Jesus Christ, who, in obedience to the will of his heavenly Father, humbled himself unto death, even the painful death of the cross."

"Your speaking of the cross," interrupted lady Harcourt, "reminds me to ask why Catholics make so frequent use of what they call the 'sign of the cross:' Protestants generally ridicule the practice."

"No doubt they do," said Frances, resuming the defensive; "nevertheless, it is with that sign they are baptized. Our catechism teaches, that Catholics use the sign of the cross to put them in mind of the holy Trinity, and also that Christ died upon the cross for their salvation. It is employed in the administration of all the sacraments, to show that their whole force and efficacy are derived from the passion and death of our Saviour."

"It was probably often applied to superstitious objects," said Lady Harcourt, "or else not used by the primitive

Christians; otherwise the reformers would not have laid it aside, as they professed to abolish those observances only which the church had introduced without sufficient authority."

"Had the reformers endeavored to reform themselves," said Frances, "they would have been much better occupied, than in arrogantly attempting to improve the church established by Jesus Christ, and defended by his promise that he would remain with her, and teach her all truth, to the end of the world. The Catholic religion had stood the test of fifteen hundred years, was the same then as it had ever been; and certainly it was great presumption in such men as Luther, Calvin, Beza, &c., to venture upon any innovation in a church which was the work of God himself. I am very angry with them."

"Your anger will avail but little, my love," interrupted Miss Hargrave, who was apprehensive that Frances would grow too warm. "They have long since appeared before the judgment-seat of God, to answer for their conduct. Instead of giving way to our zeal against them and their followers, it will be more advantageous to show, by the regularity and holiness of our own lives, that the errors and superstitions imputed to the church, of which we have the happiness to be members, are gross calumnies, invented by men who sought more latitude of conscience than the divine and moral law of the gospel allowed, and who could not compass their ends otherwise than by defaming the mother who had tenderly fostered them in her bosom. Have you any thing further to remark, my dear Frances, on her ladyship's objection to the sign of the cross?"

"Only that it is coëval with the time of the apostles. The first Christians frequently used it, to imply that they were not ashamed to make open profession of their faith in a crucified God. The observance has been handed down to us, and it is practised, more or less, by every Catholic."

"I believe," said Lady Harcourt, "the more enlightened Catholics seldom have recourse to it, except at the beginning and end of their prayers; but the lower classes in Ireland, and in Catholic countries abroad, are continually blessing themselves, as they call it, yet in such a manner that an indifferent spectator would merely suppose that they were brushing off flies. It unavoidably excites the ridicule of those who differ from you in religious opinions."

“They ridicule every religious ceremony that they do not understand,” observed Maria, taking up the conversation; “and it is a pity that *enlightened* Catholics pay so much deference to their prejudices as to discontinue this pious custom. Every religious act may be abused; but the abuse does not invalidate the act itself, except as regards those who perform it amiss. Many miracles have been wrought by the sign of the cross; and it is a safe and powerful defence against the illusions of the devil, who trembles at this sign. Tertullian speaks of its frequent use among the Christians of his days. ‘At every step,’ says he, ‘at every coming in and going out—when we put on our clothes or shoes—when we wash—when we sit down to table—when we light a candle—when we go to bed—whatever conversation engages us, we imprint on our foreheads the sign of the cross.’ The church has constantly employed this sign in blessing every article appropriated to her service. She recommends the use of it to her children, but exhorts them to make it in a proper and decorous manner, and with faith and recollection of mind; otherwise it will neither be pleasing to God nor profitable to them. Had your ladyship consulted mamma, or my governess, you would no doubt have received a clearer explanation than we have been able to supply.”

“I am better satisfied with what you and your sister have stated on this subject, than if I had appealed to higher authority,” returned her ladyship, “and it affords me much gratification to hear you defend so ably the practices of your religion. Oblige me now, by continuing your account of the festivals.”

“I think Whitsuntide comes next,” said Teresa; “may I mention what I know of it?”—“I shall listen to you with pleasure,” answered her ladyship; and Teresa began.

“Whitsuntide, or Pentecost, was a festival observed in the old law, in memory of the epoch when the commandments were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, in thunder and lightning. In the new law, the church commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ promised his apostles, that he would send them his Holy Spirit, who would console them for his absence, bring to their recollection his divine instructions, teach them all truth, and abide with them for ever. Accordingly, on the fiftieth day after the resurrection, the apostles and others, who, to the

number of about one hundred and twenty, were assembled in an upper room (where they had passed their time in the devout exercise of prayer, during the ten days which had elapsed since the Ascension), heard, on a sudden, a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind, which filled the whole house wherein they were sitting. There appeared over each of them parted tongues, as it were of fire, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost."

"Thrice happy apostles!" exclaimed Maria. "How must your hearts, and those of all present, have glowed with divine love, and been inflamed with zeal for the honor of God!"

"They presently gave proof of the change which was wrought within them," resumed Teresa; "for the Jews, who had heard an extraordinary noise, assembled to inquire the reason, and were struck with surprise on discovering that the apostles were no longer timid and afraid of being seen, but that they were filled with courage, and were burning with ardor to propagate the word of God. Coming forth, they boldly preached the gospel of the crucified Jesus; and, being miraculously endowed with the gift of tongues, Jews of various nations, who were assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate their festival, understood them, as if each had been addressed in his own language. The people, wrapt in astonishment at this wonder, and captivated by the eloquence of the hitherto illiterate apostles, listened attentively to the animated discourse of St. Peter, who, in his first sermon, made converts to the number of three thousand, who were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

"I should like to have heard the sermons of the inspired apostles," continued Teresa; "they must have been very sublime and impressive, since they produced this effect on people so hard-hearted as the Jews. At St. Peter's second sermon, five thousand were converted: why do we never hear of such wonders now?"

"Because, my love, true miracles ceased with the time of the apostles and their immediate disciples," returned Lady Harcourt, quickly. "The contrary position is one of the abuses of the Catholic church, which the reformers have exposed."

"Your ladyship has certainly been misinformed on this subject," said Frances, "and I could easily adduce authority out of papa's library to prove it. I will, however, from memory, venture to assert, that in every age, down to

the present time, the Catholic church has been illustrated by miracles. Wherever the standard of Christianity was planted, and the gospel preached to infidel nations by the successors of the apostles, the truth of the doctrine which they taught was attested by the most wonderful and incontrovertible miracles. The sick were cured, the dead recalled to life, cripples became straight, the blind received their sight ; and these prodigies were achieved in the presence of multitudes. Our divine Redeemer, on the eve of quitting his apostles, assured them that whatsoever they should ask in his name, with faith, he would grant ; that they should work miracles, even greater than those which he had performed ; and that he would remain with them, and teach them all truth, to the end of the world. Now, my dear excellent lady," continued Frances, in the playful manner which distinguished her when she was in good humor, "you are well aware that Christ knew the apostles would not live for 1800 years ; consequently, that promise must have applied, not to them and their disciples exclusively, but to their successors, to the end of time. Observe, however, that these marks of the power and approval of God, in the dissemination of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, are not to be met with in any other than the one holy Catholic and apostolic church. Your ladyship has perhaps never heard of, or, hearing, would not believe, the wonderful miracles wrought in the sixteenth century by St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies, who, powerful in word and work, converted innumerable multitudes to the faith of Christ, and confirmed, by the most evident miracles, the truth of the doctrines which he taught. I might also, if it were necessary, cite many others, both before and since his time. The reformers, confident that these signs would not accompany the introduction of their religious novelties, did well to reject them, in order to save their credit."

Lady Harcourt was about to reply, when the governess, fearing that the discussion would grow too warm, took advantage of a momentary pause, to make some remarks on the observations of Teresa, concerning the little benefit that is generally derived from sermons at the present day. She, accordingly, asked that young lady if she could remember any parable that applied to the subject ; and Teresa immediately repeated that of the sower, from the 13th

chapter of St. Matthew, with the explanation that follows it.

Miss Hargrave, anxious to enrich the minds of her pupils with every species of useful knowledge, had obliged them to learn by heart the parables in the gospel, and carefully availed herself of each opportunity that occurred to exercise their memory in reciting them, and their judgment in the correct application of them. It was not, therefore, surprising, that Teresa should select that which was the most appropriate. When she had finished, the governess proceeded to state, that after the elucidation of the parable given by Jesus Christ to his apostles, for their and our instruction, it was scarcely necessary for her to add a single remark, because its meaning was clear and obvious.

"I will, however," she continued, "engage your attention a few moments, and observe to you, that the same gospel is preached now to Christians which was formerly proclaimed to infidel nations; and if we do not perceive the same beneficial effects in ourselves and others, we may, I fear, justly ascribe it to our want of the requisite dispositions. The good seed, which ought to produce fruit a hundred-fold, is thrown away upon us, because it falls on sterile ground. We heedlessly suffer the birds of the air to devour it, permitting every idle and dissipating thought to blot from our memory the exhortations of the preacher. We are too much engrossed with the cares and pleasures of the world, to allow this heavenly seed to make a due impression. It sometimes, indeed, takes root, by inspiring us with worthy sentiments, and a resolution, though a feeble one, to reform our lives. We are very willing to acknowledge the importance of the truths delivered to us; but we are too much the slaves of self-love and indolence, to act up to the duties which they enjoin. Thus, after years of instruction, we find ourselves but little improved; and this arises, not because the ministers of Jesus Christ have failed in sowing good seed, but because we have not cherished it in our hearts, or made a practical use of their advice."

"I perfectly agree with you, my dear madam," said Lady Harcourt, "as to the fundamental cause why sermons generally produce so little effect; but do you not think that very much depends on the eloquence of the preacher?"

"I am sure it does," observed Frances, hastily; "for when Mr. Alexander, who sometimes favors us with a sermon (and whose style is certainly very superior to that of Mr. Morini), ascends the pulpit, I could look at and listen to him for an hour or two, without being tired."

"Perhaps he is young and handsome," said Lady Harcourt.—"Neither the one nor the other," returned Frances, smiling; "but his eloquence and graceful action captivate me, and cause the truths which he delivers to make a deeper impression on my mind."—"On your senses, my love," interrupted Miss Hargrave; "but I question whether they more effectually touch the heart."

"The flowers of rhetoric please the ear, and graceful action, by adding to the charm, forcibly rivets the attention. Unless, however, we are firmly resolved to avoid the evil, and embrace the good, thus agreeably laid before us, it will shortly appear that, in listening to the discourse, it was the dress and ornaments in which the words of instruction were clothed, and not the desire of improvement, that fixed our otherwise wandering thoughts. I cannot persuade myself that the efficacy of sermons depends, in any material degree, on the tone of voice or on the action employed by the preacher. If good seed, scattered by an industrious hand, fall on a fertile soil, it will produce abundant fruit, although the sower may have no claim to extraordinary skill. Neither can eloquence be an indispensable requisite to the circulation of the truths of the gospel; otherwise no ministers, except such as are specially gifted with it, would be delegated by the church to become the instructors of her children."

"But is it not tedious," resumed Frances, who was never fond of yielding a favorite opinion, "to be obliged to listen for half an hour or more to a discourse which in no manner applies to our situation, and which is rendered still less interesting by being ungrammatically constructed, and badly delivered? Perhaps, too, it is on a controversial subject, and then one sits on thorns for fear of the offence it may give to those who differ from our creed. I am sure, under such circumstances, it is impossible to refrain from criticism and complaint."

"I do not allow a controversial sermon to make my seat so uneasy," interrupted Maria, laughing; "for I like to hear one, and have no dread of the consequences."

"I readily admit," said Miss Hargrave, "that some



preachers have a less pleasing delivery than others. But this can by no means justify our severe remarks, nor be an excuse for our malevolence in exposing their defects. Endeavor, Frances, to conquer the censorious spirit which, I lament to observe, is taking possession of your mind, lest it should destroy, in your regard, the good fruit which the instructions might otherwise produce. It ill becomes young persons to encourage a disposition to find fault with every sermon they hear. This kind of detraction from the merits of the preacher may, indeed, be followed by very injurious consequences, as it tends to impair the influence of his exhortations, by causing many of the hearers to listen with a view to criticise, rather than to be informed and improved."

"But is it not true," rejoined Frances, "that all sermons are not equally applicable to us?"

"Although a discourse may not seem to have an immediate reference to our particular case," said Miss Hargrave, "still, as its general tendency is to point out the fatal effects of vice, or animate us to the practice of virtue, it will always afford instruction. I therefore entreat you to listen to sermons with the respectful attention which is ever due to the word of God."

"What is your opinion of controversial sermons?" resumed Frances. "I have heard Catholics remark, that being satisfied as to the truth of their religion, and knowing the arguments which may be brought forward in its support, such discourses are not required for their instruction, and that they serve only to alarm, and give offence to Protestants. I have little doubt, however, that in opposition to all this, you will find something to advance in their favor."

"My opinion on this point is certainly at variance with yours, although I trust that it is not singular. To disseminate the religion of Jesus Christ, it is necessary that his gospel should be preached, and not merely the moral law explained, but also the principles on which faith and doctrine are grounded."

"If we consider ourselves secure of salvation, because we profess the true faith, shall we be so selfish, as to feel indifferent with regard to the extension of that blessing to others? And how can it be more effectually extended, and brought within the power of all, than by preaching? Faith comes by hearing. Where, then, are the greater

number of those who differ from us in religion, to learn the truth, but from the pulpit? Curiosity induces hundreds to visit our temples; some of them cannot read, others have no leisure, and few, perhaps, of those whose time is at their own command, have the means of procuring the books which would be required to convince them of their errors."

"That is true," said Frances; "but cannot the doctrines of the Catholic church be taught, without reference to Protestants? Though we know them to be wrong, I conceive we ought to spare their feelings, and point out their errors with great gentleness. I fear they often think us very illiberal."

"It is this pusillanimous fear, and not true charity, that urges you and many others to find fault with a controversial preacher. Would that physician be considered humane, who, from the apprehension of causing momentary uneasiness, should suffer his patient to die, when, by acquainting him with his danger, and administering judicious remedies, he might have preserved his life? Truth, my dear child, however cautiously told, always assumes an appearance of harshness, when it is at variance with our favorite opinions.

"The religion of Jesus Christ has been so disfigured and calumniated, that it is necessary to expose the falsehoods, and to take off the mask, with which she has been wilfully covered by the reformers. How otherwise can their deluded followers be likely to embrace the truth? Nor is it an easy matter to eradicate deep-rooted prejudices, and induce people to resign opinions which they have been taught from infancy to revere, unless you can convince them, by the strongest arguments, that they are not in the path that leads to heaven. To undeceive them in this respect is of the utmost consequence, and worthy the zeal of the preacher who charitably undertakes the office; for the salvation of a single soul is of infinite value in the sight of God."

"We must, then, I suppose," said Frances, "make a merit of listening with patience to such discourses, under the impression that they may be beneficial to others, though they are without advantage to ourselves."—"Certainly. I am not, however, of your opinion, that controversial discourses are wholly useless to Catholics. I think, on the contrary, that they are not only profitable, but even neces-

sary for our instruction, in countries where our religious creed is often abused, and our ordinances are turned into ridicule. They serve to strengthen our faith, and to supply us with solid arguments in its defence ; and, as truth will ever bear the closest investigation, they prove, in the most satisfactory manner, that the religion we profess is the same which was taught by the apostles of Christ, and in support of which they cheerfully shed their blood !”

“ In future, then, my dear Frances, as often as you are present at a controversial discourse, do not suffer it to alarm you, and fill you with discontent, but rather let it excite in your breast sentiments of gratitude to God, who, without any merit on your part, has caused you to be early instructed in his holy faith. Charity, also, should induce you to implore the grace of the Almighty, in behalf of such as are still wandering in the mazes of error ; pray that their minds may be enlightened to discover the truth, and their hearts be disposed courageously to embrace it. Those who have not borne the yoke from their youth, find it very difficult to conform to practices they have been long accustomed to despise ; practices that are painful to self-love, and to which their being of divine institution can alone reconcile man’s haughty spirit. Sincere converts generally make most edifying Catholics, and I am persuaded there are many who, could they but be prevailed on to discard their prejudices, and investigate the merits of the ancient faith, would, on finding it to be the ‘ pillar and ground of truth,’ embrace it without delay.”

“ We are obliged to you for your charitable sentiments in our regard,” said Lady Harcourt, “ though I cannot admit that we need them ; for I am perfectly satisfied, that Protestantism is but a new name for the ancient faith, purified from the encumbrances which the latter had contracted in the stream of time. I acknowledge, however, that my residence at Alton Park, and my conversations with your amiable pupils, have had the effect of removing many of my early prejudices, and I feel convinced that if Protestants in general would take the trouble to inquire into your doctrines, theirs also, like mine, would quickly disappear.”

“ The encumbrances, as your ladyship is pleased to term them,” said Frances, smiling, “ are those points of faith or discipline, with regard to which we often differ, and some

of which, you know, I have already, in my feeble way, discussed with you. At present I must allow you to indulge your own opinion quietly, for the long disquisition we have had on the subject of pulpit eloquence, has occupied so much time, that it will be a month before we arrive at the end of the festivals. Pray, Teresa, relate, in a few words, what you have further to observe on the feast of Whitsuntide, and do not detain us with your childish wonders, nor by asking additional questions."

"Teresa must not be fettered in that manner," said the governess.—"Nor I either," interrupted Lady Harcourt; "I love to make inquiries, and sometimes to provoke a petulant answer from my youthful antagonists. It is with me, my dear Frances, and not with Teresa, that you are to be angry for the lecture we have had on sermons."—"I shall repay you with interest," said Frances, good humoredly, "the first opportunity that presents itself; but at this moment the long discussion in which we were lately engaged, renders me anxious to avoid a new one. Besides, I want to finish the task I have set myself, which, if I am drawn into an argument with your ladyship, I shall be sure not to accomplish. Now, Teresa, you have had plenty of leisure to arrange your ideas, so begin and finish as quickly as possible."—"I almost forget where we left off," said Teresa, preparing to renew the conversation.—"Oh, pray do not revert to where we left off," interrupted again the amusing Frances; "that, you know, is a dangerous topic."

"I have already mentioned," returned Teresa, "that the infusion of the Holy Ghost wrought a complete change in the apostles; they became new men, and a subject of astonishment even to themselves. Animated by the Spirit of God, and enlightened with wisdom from above, they readily explained the Scriptures, and the mysteries of their faith; courageously defended the cause of their heavenly Master; openly proclaimed his resurrection; and at length shed their blood to prove the divine origin of the doctrines they taught. The Christian religion, which quickly overspread the world, and subjected both Jews and Gentiles to its benign influence, was propagated by twelve poor men, unskilled in human learning, and unsupported by temporal power. Their mission was from God; for Jesus Christ commanded them to 'teach all nations, baptizing them in

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

"The religion they inculcated produced a visible effect on the new converts, who seemed to have but one heart and one soul. They lived in common, selling all they possessed, and giving the money to the apostles, to be distributed according to the wants of each. They rejoiced in suffering for the sake of Christ; they met daily to pray, to hear the word of God, and to receive the blessed sacrament. The proud and violent were now humble and meek, the avaricious distinguished themselves by their charity, and those who had hitherto allowed full indulgence to their passions, became, on a sudden, mortified, religious and chaste."

"Very different from the effect produced by the reformers, Teresa," said Frances. "But I will not plague my kind friend to-day; so proceed, child, and do not dwell half an hour on the instructions, since no one but yourself can possibly stand in need of them."

"Gently, my dear Frances," said Miss Hargrave, observing that Teresa was angry; "do not hurt the feelings of your sister. We are all too apt to forget our spiritual duties, and, therefore, it is necessary that we should be reminded of them by frequent admonitions; continue, my love."

"They will come with better grace from Maria or Jane," she returned, "and, with your consent, I will resign the honor to them."

Teresa could not be prevailed on to utter another sentence, and Miss Mordaunt was requested to continue the discourse.

"The church," said that young lady, "being anxious to impress on the minds of her children the advantages which accrue from receiving the Holy Ghost in their hearts, earnestly exhorts them to solicit his presence, and to prepare for him an acceptable habitation. We are instructed, that, though he does not descend on Christians now in a visible manner, as he did on the apostles, nevertheless, he becomes, invisibly, the willing guest of all who are sincerely desirous of so consoling a union. But, to accomplish this, we must purify from all mortal sin the abode in which he is invited to dwell, as the Spirit of God and Satan can never inhabit the same breast."

"In order to sanctify this festival, we are called upon to

adore the Holy Ghost, the third person of the most blessed Trinity. We ought to pray, that he will vouchsafe to engrave upon our hearts the sacred law of God, and the maxims of Jesus Christ; that he will inspire us with courage to profess and to observe them, during the whole course of our lives, notwithstanding the opposition we shall be sure to meet with from the world, and our own corrupt nature. The Holy Ghost is the spirit of peace and charity; we must entreat him to infuse into our souls these heavenly virtues, whereby we shall be enabled to suffer persecution with patience, to forgive our enemies, and to live in unity with all mankind.

"It is likewise proper, at this season, to reflect on the obligations we contracted in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, and examine how far we have complied with our solemn engagements. Those who have not been confirmed, ought now to prepare for that sacred rite; those who have, should beg that the grace then bestowed, may be renewed in them, and that their souls may be made the permanent residence of the Holy Ghost. As the sacrament of confirmation can be conferred but once, those who feel conscious, that they have been so unfortunate as to receive it without the dispositions which it demands, should endeavor, at this time, to make the best reparation in their power, by sincerely lamenting their former negligence, humbly confessing their fault, and earnestly soliciting the Spirit of God again to descend, and take up his abode with them for ever. Monday and Tuesday being considered as a part of this great festival, are to be observed, the former as a holiday of obligation, the latter as a day of particular devotion."\*

"Thank you, my dear," said Lady Harcourt, on finding that Miss Mordaunt had concluded her remarks; "I can offer no objection to any thing you have advanced, but am persuaded, on the contrary, that if people generally spent the festivals in a more religious manner than is usual, we should soon become better Christians. I doubt, however, whether the Catholics, as a body, sanctify them as you describe."

"Many individuals assuredly do," said Miss Hargrave; "but, in the greater number of us, there is much room for amendment. We observe the letter, but not the spirit of the law, and thus fulfil our duties very imperfectly."

\* See note, page 230.

"Name the other festivals which occur about this time," resumed her ladyship. "It has this moment struck me, that I have a letter to answer, which will prevent me from remaining with you more than ten minutes. You must not, therefore, enter on a subject that requires much explanation."

"Corpus Christi," said Maria, "is the next festival; it is movable, and consequently depends on the time of Easter; but in the month of June, there are the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, a day of devotion, on the 24th; and St. Peter and Paul, a holiday of obligation, on the 29th."

"Then, if you please, I will select St. John," returned Lady Harcourt, "and leave the others for to-morrow. His life is described in the New Testament, and highly eulogized by our Saviour; but as it was too perfect to be imitated, it will not afford much useful instruction to persons who live in the world."

"I will be careful not to intrude long on your ladyship's time," resumed Miss Alton; "but you will, I trust, permit me to observe, that if the life of St. John be above our imitation, it may, nevertheless, be studied by us with very great advantage. We are taught, that our only essential business here is to save our souls; and though we are not obliged for this end to quit the world, and retire into a desert, yet, having promised in baptism to renounce sin, we ought to copy the innocence and purity of St. John, whom the young in particular should take for their model. If we have not the resolution to follow him in his austere and penitential observances, it is at least incumbent on us to retrench our superfluities, to mortify our passions, and to do penance for our sins, if we aspire to share with him in the happiness of heaven. His profound humility, though he was full of merit, ought to make us blush for our pride and self-sufficiency. He was replenished with the riches of grace and benediction, and yet he considered himself as the last of men—as unworthy even to loose the latchet of His shoes, whose precursor he was selected to be. The boldness with which he reproached the incestuous Herod, and which cost him his life, should teach us to reprove, with courage, the vices of those who are under our care, and never to permit the fear of what the world will say or think, to induce us to countenance any proposition or act that is contrary to the principles of truth and justice. St.

John was styled 'Precursor,' because he was sent to prepare the way for Christ ; and 'Baptist,' from his office of baptizing the Jews, whom he had converted by his preaching. He may be considered, also, as the model and pattern of those ascetics who, in the first and succeeding ages, quitted the world, and withdrew into deserts, that they might devote themselves to God, by a life of mortification, penitence and prayer."

"I could wish to make a few remarks on this subject," interrupted Lady Harcourt ; "but perceiving that it is now too late, I must, with many thanks for your attention, bid you adieu till to-morrow ; for, as we dine to-day at Lord Anson's, I shall not have the pleasure of calling on you in the afternoon."

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

"I REGRET that we have not yet done with the festivals," said Frances to her governess ; "for, instead of conversing with Lady Harcourt about the party last night, we must revert again to the old subject. I am extremely sorry it was ever introduced."

"And why should you be sorry, my love," returned Miss Hargrave, "since you have all acquitted yourselves well, and displayed information which is highly creditable to you ? When I suggested these familiar discussions, the principal object I had in view was to exercise your memory, well knowing that the great intercourse which subsists between Protestants and Catholics would expose you, some time or other, to inquiries as to the meaning or importance of the festivals and ceremonies observed in our church. I did not, indeed, foresee that Lady Harcourt would be present ; but as it has happened so, I am far from regretting the circumstance. Your parents also are much gratified by her ladyship's favorable reports, and the attention you have paid to the religious branch of your education. You will continue, I hope, to pursue this important subject ; but let humility and piety keep pace with your study ; ever remembering, that learning, without humility, is injurious to its possessor, and that a knowledge of religion without piety, cannot be conducive to eternal happi-



ness. Have you not noticed, of late, Maria, that your mamma has seldom passed the afternoon with us?"

"I have," said that young lady, "and lamented it; because, as she is much better qualified than myself to answer Lady Harcourt's questions in a satisfactory manner, I would, when it became my turn to speak, have requested her to take up the conversation."

"For that very reason she has relinquished the pleasure of joining you as usual; since, knowing your extreme shyness and timidity, she was well aware that her presence would deter you from delivering your sentiments freely. Diffidence is an amiable quality, particularly in youth; but the excess of it should be discouraged as an imperfection, which renders the character undecided, and causes it to be too easily swayed by the suggestions of others. A stranger who observes you in the company of your mother, would suppose that you are kept under the greatest restraint, and never allowed to give an opinion. Thus your extreme reserve is calculated to injure her in the judgment of the world, which will accuse her of being a severe or a partial parent. But this, I am persuaded, you do not wish, and——"

"Oh, by no means," interrupted Miss Alton; "I love her too well to desire that she should suffer in the estimation of any one on my account. I will, therefore, endeavor to overcome my timidity: I am sensible that it must always make me appear to a disadvantage; because it deprives me of courage to express what I feel. My dear mamma never boasts of her education or her learning; but when she attempts to speak, every tongue is silent, every eye is turned towards her. She has a great command of language, and she employs it in so guarded and judicious a manner, that she never seems to utter an expression which it would be desirable to recall. My little knowledge dwindles into insignificance when contrasted with hers. I compare it to a twinkling star, whose feeble light is eclipsed by the effulgence of the sun; and I am accordingly silent when, but for that consideration, I should possibly make an effort to speak."

"The compliment you pay to such a mother," said Miss Hargrave, "does credit to your discernment, and is worthy of your affectionate heart; and I predict that, as the sun withdraws its rays, the twinkling star (to pursue your own simile) will then appear, and shine with no ordinary

splendor. Be careful, however, not to obscure its light, by indulging either your excessive diffidence, or your natural shyness: the former will cause you to seem ignorant; the latter, to be thought disdainful or wanting in affection."

"I suspect you have no occasion to reprove me for this *mauvaise honte*," said Frances, smiling.

"No, my love," answered Miss Hargrave; "for if you had a little more, it would be preferable. However, I am happy to observe, that neither the excess in the one, nor the deficiency in the other, amounts to a fault; still it must be allowed, that extreme diffidence is an imperfection in the character, and that some efforts ought to be made to overcome it."

"It has already cost me many severe struggles," said Maria. "I will, nevertheless, exert myself even more resolutely to surmount it."

"And I know you are equal to the task," resumed Miss Hargrave. "To exhibit, in your intercourse with the world, a becoming confidence in yourself and your abilities, does not argue a want of humility, any more than shyness can be considered as a proof that you possess that virtue. Though we ought not to perform our actions with a view only to please men, yet charity requires us to avoid giving them offence. For this reason, we should be careful neither to intrude by our boldness, nor to disoblige by an excess of timidity."

The unlooked-for entrance of Lady Alton prevented any further observation, and she was greeted by her daughters with the liveliest marks of pleasure.

"I suppose your ladyship has brought mamma with you this afternoon," said the volatile Frances, addressing Lady Harcourt, who had accompanied her mother, "that she may undertake your defence, in the event of your exciting my anger by your opposition to Catholic doctrines; but this resource will not avail you. However, if you promise not to make objections, I will engage to be silent while my sisters and Miss Mordaunt run over the few remaining festivals, and bring this monotonous subject to a close."

"I can by no means agree to your proposal, my good friend," observed Lady Harcourt, "for that would amount to a tacit acquiescence in your principles: I am not to be made a convert so easily."

"You may repent your temerity," said Frances, laughing, "for I shall give you no quarter."

"With all my heart," rejoined the good-natured Lady Harcourt; "as long as you uphold that which you consider to be the truth, I will hear you patiently."

"Before we begin," resumed Frances, "indulge me with a short account of the party yesterday; I hope you spent an agreeable evening."—"I see," returned her ladyship, "you are longing for a description of the fête, and so, with the consent of superiors, I will gratify your curiosity; but as crowded rooms have lost, in my regard, their power to please, and as I prefer the company of a few select friends to an assemblage of persons, the greater part of whom are strangers, or indifferent to me, you must not expect that I shall display much enthusiasm in the occasion."

Her ladyship then entertained her auditors for half an hour with an account, interesting to them, of the various amusements of the preceding evening, blending her narrative with many instructive remarks.

"I entered into conversation," she continued, "with several of the younger ladies, who had not long quitted the school-room, and"—"And what did you think of them?" interrupted Frances, eagerly, not waiting for her ladyship's observations; "I know you are disposed to criticise young persons; and few will be able to stand the test of your rigid scrutiny."—"Her ladyship's judgment is so excellent," said Maria, "that if her criticism be severe, her approbation is, at least, very desirable." Lady Harcourt politely acknowledged the compliment, and added, that there were few on whom she could so justly confer unqualified praise as on those who surrounded her.

"Were the young ladies with whom you conversed handsome?" asked Frances.—"Did you admire them?" said Miss Alton.—"As I would elegant porcelain figures," answered her ladyship, "the chief merit of which lies in the skill and taste of the maker. A pretty face, or a fine figure, will, undoubtedly, for a moment, attract notice, but the perfection of the interior can alone secure permanent esteem. It is the fashion of the world to applaud beauty, and a thousand ridiculous and unmeaning compliments are lavished on the possessors of it, which serve to awaken a dangerous vanity in the heart of youth. It too frequently happens, that a beautiful girl thinks of little but of adorning her person, and applies only to such accomplishments as

are calculated to display it to the greatest advantage. Her condition, however, is by no means an enviable one. If she be educated by an injudicious mother or governess, she is taught to consider personal appearance as the most important of all objects, and is destined to be a slave to it from her childhood. She is not allowed to expose herself either to the wind, the fire, or the sun, lest she injure her complexion; nor is she suffered to take the food which nature requires, but with the utmost wariness, lest her figure lose, in some degree, its elegant proportions.

“The fancied superiority which beauty confers over those who are less favored by the gifts of nature, is often the cause of a multitude of imperfections. A pretty girl, conscious of her charms, and gratified by the admiration they excite, too generally neglects the culture of the mind and heart, and contents herself with accomplishments as unsubstantial, and sometimes as evanescent, as her personal attractions. Music, singing and dancing entertain but for a while, and a trifling accident may prevent their display altogether. Time infallibly undermines beauty—a fit of sickness may prematurely destroy it; and what has the faded fair one, who placed her happiness on so unsteady a foundation, left to supply its place, and console her for its loss? Absolutely nothing. With the decay of her beauty, her powers of fascination have ceased; the compliments in which, for some years, she had been accustomed to delight, are now transferred to younger faces; her empty head and uncultivated heart afford her no resources, and thus she frequently becomes envious, ill-humored and discontented.”

“Your ladyship has been exhibiting a frightful caricature,” said Maria, smiling; “this is certainly not the case with all handsome women,” she continued, looking affectionately at her mother, and then glancing her eye on Lady Harcourt.

“Assuredly not, my love; yet I fear that, speaking in general terms, the exceptions are rare.”—“But vanity and ignorance cannot be the necessary consequences of beauty,” returned Miss Alton.—“Your idea is perfectly correct,” said her ladyship; “these faults arise from our natural corruption and self-love, fostered in infancy by injudicious praise, and uncontrolled by a solid and religious education. It too often occurs, with regard to a handsome girl.

that study is relinquished at the very time when it would be most serviceable, and its absence is supplied by the all-important consideration, of what dresses and colors are most becoming. To please the world and secure admiration, is the main spring of all her actions, and the cultivation of the graces, her principal employment. These are the causes of the evils which I have enumerated."

"You are disposed to be rather severe this afternoon," interrupted Frances. "Had this doctrine emanated from mamma, I should not have wondered; but coming from your ladyship, I must own, that it surprises me, as I did not consider you so rigid a moralist. Now, I always thought beauty a very great advantage, and have frequently been sorry that I had no pretensions to it, for I perceive that it invariably commands much deference and respect."

"For a certain period," resumed Lady Harcourt, "it excites the admiration of the men, and the envy of the women; but, as I observed before, its triumph is of short continuance, unless it be maintained by goodness of heart, and uniformly virtuous conduct. Beauty of person exposes a woman to many temptations from which others are exempt; and, accordingly, she who is distinguished by it, requires an unusual share of modesty and humility, to preserve her heart uncontaminated amidst the poisonous incense with which she is constantly assailed."

"Do you imagine that people who have not pretty faces are always unhappy, mamma?" asked Teresa. "I often hear Frances lament that she is so plain, as she calls herself, though no one else thinks her so."—"Frances is to blame," said Lady Alton, "to suffer a consideration of so small importance, to cause her a moment's uneasiness. Beauty and ugliness are accidental distinctions, which depend not on ourselves, and for which we are not accountable, except inasmuch as we permit them to exercise an undue influence over our minds. If the former awaken sentiments of vanity and self-complacency, and the latter render us fretful and discontented, we are highly culpable. Between beauty and ugliness there are many grades. You, my dear Frances, are in the happy medium, and have every reason to be satisfied. An artificer likes not to hear his productions undervalued; and the all-wise Creator, who has fashioned us according to his will, must assuredly feel displeasure whenever he observes us depreciating his works either in ourselves or in others. Those who are

deficient in personal attractions, should never allow themselves to repine, because nature has been less bountiful to them than to some of their neighbors. They ought, on the contrary, to submit to their defects with patience, and cultivate assiduously those amiable qualities which will outlive beauty, and secure the esteem of all who prefer virtue, whatever guise she may assume, to those external graces, which captivate for a moment, but are acknowledged, on due consideration, to be infinitely less estimable than the ornaments of the mind."

"Your ladyship's opinion coincides with my own," observed Lady Harcourt. "We readily become accustomed to either beauty or deformity: the one soon ceases to command applause—the other, to excite disgust. But we never can be reconciled to fits of ill-humor, to pride, contempt, and the sallies of sarcastic wit. Whilst a benevolent heart, the smiles of good-humor, and a disposition to please, will always infuse charms into the plainest face, the idolized beauty must, when she has sported for a few brief seasons in the sunshine of flattery, have the mortification to find herself abandoned for fairer forms. Do not, therefore, my young friend, lament in future, that you are not superlatively handsome. A countenance beaming intelligence and good-nature, with a voice which is never heard but in accents of mildness, cannot fail to ensure esteem; and when these prepossessing qualities are accompanied by graceful manners, a becoming modesty, and a willingness to oblige, an impression is made, which neither the inroads of time, nor the effects of sickness, are able to remove."

"If your ladyship had no pretensions to beauty," said Frances, "I should consider the hostility with which you regard that distinction, as the effect of envy; but as that cannot possibly be the cause, I must conclude, I presume, that it is not so valuable an endowment as I have hitherto supposed, and that I ought to be more contented with myself."—"You have no reason to be otherwise. And let me take the liberty to caution you against the habit of disparaging your person; because, if it be not the result of a refined and secret vanity, it borrows, at least, the appearance of that vice. A young lady, who is not decidedly plain, should avoid this practice, or she will incur the risk of being viewed in the degrading light of *one who is asking for a compliment*."

"Our kind friend has given you an excellent lesson, my love," said Lady Alton, "and I hope you will endeavor to profit by it." Frances blushed, and was silent. Lady Harcourt sought to turn the conversation, and requested Maria to explain the festival of Corpus Christi.

Maria, willing to oblige, though doubtful of her ability, immediately began. "This festival always occurs on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. It was instituted in the thirteenth century, and still retains its Latin name, signifying 'the body of Christ,' which we believe to be truly present, under the form of bread, in the sacrament of the eucharist.

"The object of this feast is to make reparation to Jesus Christ, for the insults he receives from unworthy communicants—from those who disbelieve his real presence, and from those who treat that doctrine as a subject of indifference or derision. We are, accordingly, instructed, on this solemn occasion, to return thanks to our Saviour for this pledge of his love; to demonstrate our faith in this wonderful mystery by respectful deportment in his presence; to humble ourselves profoundly before him, with a view to make atonement for our former negligences, and to renew our supplications that we may never offend him wilfully for the future.

"In the most holy sacrament of the altar, we are instructed to consider Jesus Christ under a variety of august and endearing titles. As our God and King, we are bound to render him homage and adoration; as our Redeemer, we should pour forth our grateful acknowledgments for all that he has done and suffered for us; as our victim of propitiation, we must avail ourselves of his infinite merits, and offer them with earnestness to his eternal Father, in satisfaction for our multiplied sins; and as our divine spouse, our friend and brother, we must entertain him with protestations of our fidelity and love.

"We are exhorted to be present at the morning and evening offices of the church, and to receive, with great devotion, the holy communion. During the octave of this festival, we ought to be particularly diligent in paying our daily homage to Jesus Christ; for we never can sufficiently testify our gratitude to God for the institution of this adorable mystery. It is the greatest favor his infinite love could have devised, and the source of innumerable blessings.

How much, then, are our coldness and indifference towards him to be lamented? The blessed eucharist is not only a sacrament, but also a sacrifice, and, as such, it is daily offered on the altar in the celebration of the mass."

"My dear young friend," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "your animated countenance assures me, that you are penetrated with a firm belief in the doctrines you have been taught. I, however, in common with other Protestants, dissent from this dogma of the Catholic church, as contrary to the meaning of Christ, as repugnant to reason and common sense. And as we do not believe Christ to be really present in the consecrated host, it appears to us a species of idolatry to make so many prostrations before bread and wine."

"But your ladyship is well aware, and so are the generality of Protestants," resumed Maria, "that we believe Christ to be as truly present in the sacred host, after the words of consecration, as he was present to the apostles at his last supper, when he instituted this solemn rite. We interpret the words of our Saviour in their literal sense—we know that his power is equal to his love, and have no hesitation in believing, that He who created the world by the mere act of his will, who changed rivers into blood, and water into wine, can, with equal ease, convert the elements of the sacrament into his own body and blood. Reason must here yield obedience to faith, and the proud understanding of man submit to believe, on the word of Christ, what it cannot comprehend. Ah! could you be prevailed on to inquire seriously into the truth of this consoling mystery, it is the first article of our creed that you would embrace, the last that you would relinquish. Taste, and see how sweet is the Lord, and he will amply repay the sacrifice which reason and understanding make to faith."

"Enthusiasm misleads you," said Lady Harcourt, somewhat affected by the earnestness of Maria; "yet it were a pity that so sweet a delusion should ever be dissipated. Far, therefore, be it from me to attempt to undeceive you. I must, however, in defence of my own creed, observe, that this doctrine, to which you give implicit credit, is but of modern introduction; for, till towards the middle ages, transubstantiation was never heard of. But, on account of your youth, you have probably been left in ignorance of



this, and other important innovations of the Roman church, and I may have done wrong to betray her secrets."

"Perhaps you may," said Frances, putting down her work; "for your ladyship has roused your professed antagonist, whom you will find less gentle than Maria. The Catholic church has no secrets to withhold from her flock—no innovations to disguise; nor is her dominion maintained by keeping her followers in ignorance. Jesus Christ was her Founder; and from him, through the apostles and their successors, we derive our faith. The doctrine of the Catholic church is the same now, as that which was taught by the apostles to the primitive Christians. It has never yet varied, and future generations will continue to find it unchanged."

"But this, I think, is not to the point," said Lady Harcourt.—"Your ladyship," resumed Frances, "asserts that the doctrine of transubstantiation is modern. This I beg leave to deny. The *doctrine* is coëval with Christianity itself; it is the *term* only (which expresses more clearly the thing signified) that is of modern introduction. Nor would this long word, which has given so much offence, have been called for, had not Berengarius, one of the reformers, opposed his private judgment to the universal belief, not of the Catholic church only, but of those religious bodies also who had separated themselves from her communion. The novel opinion that Christ is only figuratively present in the eucharist, quickly arrested the attention of the church. Her vigilant guardians, under St. Leo the Ninth, in the year 1050, assembled a council in Rome. The newly-invented doctrine was examined, and in that and many other councils, held during the life of Berengarius, was formally condemned. The decision of these councils was confirmed by the general councils of Lateran, Constance and Trent."

"I have nothing to do with the decision of these councils," said Lady Harcourt.—"But I have," returned Frances; "because their decision on this important point convinces me, that I profess the same faith as that which was inculcated by the apostles. They teach me, that it has been, in all ages, the unvarying belief of the church, that the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, are present under the species or appearances of bread and wine; and that this change is operated, when the words of consecration, ordained by Christ, are pronounced by the priest in the mass. The word *transubstantiation* was

only introduced to express, in a concise form, that the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the substance of wine into his sacred blood. Hence arise the respect and adoration which the church teaches her children to pay to Jesus, in the holy sacrament and sacrifice of the mass.

"If my little knowledge," continued Frances, with a smile of good humor, "is not sufficient to convince your ladyship, I hope, at least, it has had the effect of tiring you, and that you will allow us to pass to another subject."

"Not yet," said Lady Harcourt, who sometimes loved to tease Frances, and excite her petulance, with which she was much amused. "I object to the practice of your church, in giving communion, under one kind only (by which the laity are deprived of part of the grace of the sacrament), as contrary to the ordinance of Christ. To the primitive Christians it was administered under both kinds, and the reformed church has resumed this laudable custom. And——"

"And thrown away the substance for the shadow," interrupted Frances, in an under-tone of voice, though loud enough to be heard. Her ladyship, however, did not notice the remark, but continued.

"You call the mass a sacrifice—for what reason? and why is it said in a language which is not understood? I have no doubt that you can answer these objections in a satisfactory manner."

"The Catholic catechism will furnish answers satisfactory to myself," rejoined Frances, to whom Lady Harcourt particularly addressed her observations; "though they are not likely to be very agreeable to your ladyship, since they are opposed to the doctrine of your modern church. And as I do not flatter myself, that you are so earnest in the cause of truth as to be remarkably anxious for its elucidation, I shall reply to your objections in as few words as possible. Whether we receive the holy communion under one or both forms, is immaterial. The regulation on this head is only a matter of discipline, the observance of which can be enjoined or dispensed with, as is judged most expedient. The Catholic church, in giving communion under one kind only, neither acts in opposition to the ordinance of Christ, nor deprives her children of any part of the spiritual benefit which this sacrament is intended to convey. As Jesus Christ arose from the dead glorious, immortal

and impassible, his sacred body and blood are always united, and, consequently, wholly present, under either form, and under the smallest particle thereof; so that it is unreasonable to imagine, that we can receive less under one kind, or more in both. Our catechism accordingly teaches us, that Christ did not command all to receive under both kinds, for when, at the last supper, he bade those who were present to drink of the cup, none were there except the apostles. And when, in St. John, chap. vi., he seems to prescribe that the sacrament should be received under both kinds, he immediately removes the difficulty, by promising everlasting life to him who receives under the form of bread alone—‘He that eats of this bread shall live for ever.’\* There are many other texts of scripture which favor communion under one kind, and justify this practice of the Catholic church.

“Your ladyship next inquires, why we call the mass a sacrifice. I answer, because it is the oblation of the body and blood of Christ, under the species or appearances of bread and wine, in memory of his death and passion, for the remission of our sins. It is a supreme act of religion, due only to Almighty God, in testimony of his being the sovereign Lord of all things. In the old law, the sacrifices offered in the temple were only figures of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross; but in the new law, the mass is a true and real sacrifice, the victim offered being Jesus Christ.”

“Christ died once on the cross,” interrupted Lady Harcourt, “and secured for us a plentiful redemption; it is, therefore, a derogation from his merits, to suppose that any other sacrifice is necessary, or even that it can be acceptable to God.”

“The sacrifice which we offer on our altars,” returned Frances, “is not another, but a continuation of the same sacrifice. Jesus Christ, who is a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedech, having immolated himself once in a bloody manner on Mount Calvary, mercifully continues to offer daily, by the ministry of his priests, the same oblation, under the form of bread and wine. The sacrifice of the cross, therefore, and that of the mass, are one and the same, as to the chief priest who offers, and the thing which is offered: the difference consists merely in the manner of offering. The church does not offer the

\* St. John, ch. vi. ver. 59.

sacrifice of the mass from an idea that that of the cross was incomplete, but (in obedience to the injunction of her divine Founder) as a grateful remembrance of his passion and death, for the remission of our sins. It is an act of religion, of all others most acceptable to God, and (according to the prophet Malachi) is that clean oblation which, from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, was to be offered in every place among the gentiles."

"Our faith, therefore, in the real presence," said Maria, "not only justifies, but exacts, the homage and adoration which seem to give offence to your ladyship; since, in the sacrifice and sacrament of the altar, we do not acknowledge bread and wine, but the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ, impassible, glorious and immortal, as he is in heaven."

"I am satisfied with your reasons," observed Lady Harcourt, "though not a convert to them; they are sufficient to exonerate you from the charge of idolatry. Now, what can you urge in defence of the practice of employing in your liturgy an unknown language? It is, beyond dispute, injurious to the laity."

"Our catechism teaches us, that it is, in no respect, an injury," resumed Frances, "as the mass contains merely those prayers which the priest alone is enjoined to say, as the mediator between God and his people. But the people are by no means ignorant of the prayers used by the priest, because they have the same in English, in their ordinary prayer-books."

"Neither is it necessary," said Maria, "to recite the same prayers as the priest, and, consequently, a person who is instructed in the nature of the divine sacrifice, though he be utterly illiterate, may assist at it as devoutly and profitably, as one who can read, or even understand, Latin. The church, anxious for uniformity in her service, has preserved the language which was adopted by the apostles, and which, in their time, in the western world at least, was the vernacular tongue. The Latin, falling by degrees into disuse, became eventually a dead language; but it was still continued in the public service of the church, as being, on that account, less liable to alteration."

"The advantages that it possesses are numerous, and it is not one of the least, that a Catholic, in whatever country he may happen to be, and though he understand not a word of the native tongue, always finds himself at home, in the

church, because he perceives, that the divine office is celebrated in a language to which he has been accustomed from his childhood. Far different is the situation of those who have separated from our communion. Their liturgy must be translated into every language, and even into every dialect that prevails in the places wherein they wish to disseminate their opinions. If this precaution be neglected, the people must be wholly ignorant of what is going forward, and can have no means of ascertaining, whether those, with whom they have joined in prayer, profess the same faith as themselves."

"I should think that enough has been said on this subject," resumed Frances, who was not anxious to afford Lady Harcourt an opportunity to advance further objections; "we may as well proceed to another, though I do not recollect what festival is the next in order."—"That of St. Peter and Paul," said Maria.

"Thank heaven!" exclaimed Frances, "we have got through six months of the year."—"More than six, Frances," observed Teresa, "because we began with Advent, and that, you know, includes December. But I am not at all tired of these conversations, and shall be rather sorry when they are finished; for they either inform me of what I did not know before, or they bring to my recollection that which I had learned and forgotten. While you and Lady Harcourt are wrangling about some article of our creed, I consider what arguments I should be able to adduce, if questioned on the same subject; but I find you all know much more than I do."

"I am glad you acknowledge it, child," said Frances, "for it would be very mortifying, if a girl of fourteen knew, or pretended to know, as much as those who are on the eve of being introduced into the world. You have yet four years to study; but, at the expiration of that period, you will, no doubt, come forth such a prodigy of learning, that I shall appear a mere dunce. Enchanting thought! in less than five months I shall be emancipated from the toils of the school-room, and you will be left here for four long years; but never mind, Teresa, for I will bring you the prettiest *nicnacs* I can select, and write you letters every fortnight so amusing, that they will make you laugh for a week."

"I fear," said the governess, "you will, in that case, render her as dissipated as you seem inclined to be your-

self, instead of becoming the prodigy of learning which you predict."—"Oh! I am quite wild with joy, when I think of the pleasure that is in store for me," returned the animated Frances, "and I am convinced that papa and mamma will often be obliged to assume your serious looks, in order to keep me within bounds. How I shall pity you, and dear little Teresa; you will be so dull and melancholy!"

"We shall, no doubt, feel the loss of your enlivening society," resumed Miss Hargrave, "but I am not apprehensive, that we shall need your commiseration; for we, also, shall have our pleasures, and though they will be of a less dissipating nature than yours, they will afford us equal, if not superior, delight."—"I am sure I shall frequently wish myself at Alton," said Maria.

"I fear all my sage lessons," added Lady Harcourt, "have failed to satisfy Frances, that she will not meet with roses without thorns."—"Few are wise enough to profit by the experience of others," said Lady Alton, "and my sanguine Frances is by no means of the number. I predict, however, that less than two years will suffice to convince her, that worldly and tumultuous amusements convey no solid and permanent gratification to the mind. Virtuous pursuits, and a conduct regulated by the maxims of the gospel, can alone ensure that real enjoyment after which we naturally sigh. If we attain not all the happiness that is compatible with our present state of being, the privation is the effect of our own imprudence, in seeking it where it is not likely to be found."

"Dear mamma," cried the lively girl, to whom these remarks were chiefly addressed, "do not destroy the gay structure which my fancy has raised. If the reality should not equal my expectations, I know you will share and soothe my disappointment."

A few moments were now passed in discussing the projected tour through France and Italy; after which Miss Alton reminded her sister, that it would be better to revert to the former topic, and continue their description of the festivals.

"Willingly," said Frances; "this little interruption has quite renovated my spirits, and I will amuse myself with my thoughts, while you and Jane answer all the interrogatories of her ladyship." Jane, who never sought to intrude herself on the notice of any one, but constantly endeavored to show, in an advantageous light, the children of her bene-

factors, was now requested by Lady Alton to resume the discourse.

“The feast of Saints Peter and Paul, whose martyrdom we celebrate on the 29th of June, is a holiday of obligation. By means of these great saints, the church was established. St. Peter is the rock on which it is founded, and St. Paul, a favored instrument in the hands of God, propagated the new doctrine far and wide. As the latter was a learned man, he effected by the pen what he could not perform by his personal labors, and his epistles have enlightened the Christians of all succeeding generations. The calling of the prince of the apostles, from the humble condition of a fisherman, to be the head of Christ’s church, and the miraculous conversion of St. Paul, being recorded in the Holy Scripture, I need not occupy your time in relating the particulars of those events. I will conclude by remarking, that their festivals are observed together, because they suffered on the same day. St. Peter was crucified with his head downwards, thinking himself unworthy to suffer in the same position as did his divine Master. St. Paul, being a Roman citizen, was condemned to be beheaded. They were buried at Rome. Many churches, both there and throughout Christendom, have been erected to their memory, and their festival has been kept in a solemn manner from a very early period. St. Peter fixed his see at Rome, and the bishop who fills that see is called by the name of papa or pope, signifying, father of the faithful.

“We are exhorted by the church on this day, to implore the blessing of Heaven on all her ministers, that, inflamed with zeal for the glory of God, they may assiduously labor for their own sanctification, and that of the flock committed to their charge. We are instructed to pray for the conversion of those who are separated from her communion; and, finally, we are recommended to solicit for ourselves the grace of persevering to the end in the profession of her faith, and the practice of her holy doctrine; so that, animated by her spirit, we may show forth in our lives the zeal, courage, charity and humility which were exemplified by these illustrious disciples of their crucified Master.

“In July, we observe the 25th as a day of devotion. It is the feast of St. James, who was called from the trade of a fisherman, to be an apostle; he was brother to St.

John, was much favored by our divine Lord, and was one of the three who were admitted to witness the glorious sight of his transfiguration. He was the first of the apostles that died in defence of the Christian faith, being beheaded by order of Herod Agrippa.

“On the following day is St. Ann, a festival of devotion also. This saint was the happy mother of the blessed Virgin. She and her spouse, St. Joachim, were both very pious, serving God with fidelity, and walking cheerfully in the path of his commandments. They had been married many years, without having a child, and this was a continual drawback to their happiness. These holy personages, overwhelmed with grief, lamented, wept and prayed; but their sorrow was, at length, turned into joy, and their petitions were heard. Their alms-deeds proved acceptable to God, who freed Ann from her sterility, and blessed her with a daughter, whom they called Mary. The pure soul of the latter was filled with the Holy Ghost, and she was chosen by the Almighty to become, in time, the mother of his only beloved Son, the Redeemer of the world, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These are the claims of St. Ann to our devotion. Her admirable daughter was united to Joseph (heir to the sceptre of David), who, like his beauteous spouse, always preserved his virginal chastity; and thus Mary, destined to bring forth the Son of the Most High, by the power of the Holy Ghost, was, before and after child-birth, and to the last hour of her life, a pure and spotless virgin.

“St. Ann is supposed to have died when our divine Redeemer was about a year old. She had, therefore, the happiness to embrace him, and was, no doubt, privileged to carry the auspicious tidings of his birth to those holy souls who, in Limbo, earnestly sighed for his coming to release them from their long captivity. This glorious saint was eminently favored of God, in being selected for the mother of that incomparable virgin, who was chosen, on account of her humility and virtue, to bring forth the Messiah; an honor which all the women of the tribe of Judah were anxious to obtain, as they knew that he was to be born of their race. This—”

“Allow me to interrupt you,” said Lady Harcourt, “lest I should forget the remarks which I intended to make. You imagined, perhaps, that your explanation of the feast



of the apostles would pass without my notice ; but I cannot allow this to be the case, lest, as I have observed before, my silence should be construed into acquiescence. I object to, and cannot help feeling indignant at, the intolerance of the Catholic church, in her doctrine of exclusive salvation ; for you are taught to condemn all, indiscriminately, who die out of your communion. This argues great presumption, and an equal want of charity.

“ Again, what slavery can be more repugnant to the feelings, more degrading to the human mind, than the obligation she has imposed of confession ? It is folly to imagine, that man has power to remit the sins of his fellow man, a sinner like himself. In the dark ages, when this practice was introduced, it served to keep the ignorant in subjection ; but its multiplied abuses made the reformers anxious for its abolition.”

“ Yes,” interrupted Frances, not waiting for her ladyship to finish, “ and several of them would have been glad, could they have re-established it ; for when this salutary restraint on the passions was laid aside, it was found by experience, that the reformed did not do much credit to the reformers.”

“ Do not interrupt me,” said her ladyship with more than usual warmth ; “ when I have stated my objections, you may repel them ; but let it be by reasoning, and not by irony.” — “ What !” returned Frances, with a vivacity that was natural to her, “ consent to listen quietly to a detail of calumnies, invented only to excuse the unjustifiable acts of the reformers ? No ; I can never respect men who, in separating themselves from the Catholic church, sought only to gratify their passions, and commit sin with impunity. I know they easily found followers ; but their disciples consisted of persons who were glad to be assured, that confession, fasting and alms-deeds were no longer necessary to salvation ; that, from the fifteenth century, heaven was to be gained on easier terms, and that the law of the gospel, which had hitherto been too severe, was now to be relaxed.”

“ My dear Frances,” said her mother, “ do not be so warm. There are, amongst Protestants, many amiable and exemplary characters.”

“ Yes, mamma,” rejoined Frances, “ I readily acknowledge that. The greater, therefore, is my indignation against the reformers for misleading them. As their creed

imposes few restraints, it is not wonderful that they adhere to it so pertinaciously; and if I were sure of reaching heaven by their broad road, I would soon turn aside from our narrow one."

"What, my dear sister, when our Saviour traced out the narrow path, and watered it with his blood! No: you speak without reflection; for I am persuaded that you have too great a veneration for the religion of the divinely inspired apostles, to abandon it for one which was instituted by mere human authority."

"You are right, my little primitive Christian," returned the lively girl; "and be assured, that I have no intention to jump out of the bark of St. Peter, at the risk of being 'tossed about by every wind of doctrine' on the waves of Protestantism."

"Defend your own religion," interrupted Lady Harcourt, calmly; "but do not jest with mine."

"Ah, I see I must treat your creed with more gentleness," said the provoking Frances; "it will not bear—"

"Still bantering, my love," interrupted Lady Alton, in a serious tone; "do, Frances, be more reasonable."

"You know I am not maintaining falsehoods, mamma; and if Lady Harcourt is offended, she has brought my severe remarks upon herself, by advancing, I do not say inventing, calumnies that have been again and again refuted."

"But not by you, my petulant antagonist," said Lady Harcourt, extending her hand, and smiling affectionately on Frances, to whom she was much attached. "I acknowledge that I have provoked your anger, and I readily forgive it; neither can I promise not to excite it for the future. I have only one more objection to submit at present, and that is to the doctrine of indulgences. I have always understood an indulgence to be a leave to commit sin, or, at least, a pardon for future sins, and that these dispensations were to be purchased for a trifle. This, of course, is a serious evil."

"It would be, were your statement correct," said Maria. "But does your ladyship really believe that such is the doctrine of the Catholic church?"

"I must confess," said Lady Harcourt, after a momentary pause, "that I have not paid much attention to the subject: I have heard it asserted in conversation, and have read the same in books. I, consequently, relied on

the veracity of my instructors, and made no further inquiry."

"The generality of Protestants," resumed Maria, "seize with avidity whatever is circulated to the prejudice of the Catholic religion; but they seldom take the trouble to listen to, or to read, the arguments and observations which may be advanced in its favor. This conduct is unfair, since it is but just to hear both sides."

"Our catechism teaches us," said Frances, "that an indulgence is 'not leave to commit sin, or a pardon for sins to come, but only a releasing of temporal punishment, due to such sins as are already forgiven us by the sacrament of penance.' Instead of being a permission to commit sin, as your ladyship supposes, we must be in a state of grace (that is, free from the guilt of mortal sin), before we can entitle ourselves to the benefit of it; we must also perform the conditions annexed."

"May I inquire what those conditions usually are?"

"Since your ladyship asks for the sake of information," replied Frances, "I will tell you with pleasure. The conditions of the indulgences which are granted to the Catholics of this country (and those are all I pretend to know any thing about, or concerning which you need be anxious) are, to confess our sins with a sincere contrition for them, to receive worthily the holy communion, to give alms to the poor, or to visit and comfort the sick, &c. and to offer up fervent prayers to God 'for the whole state of the Catholic church throughout the world, for bringing all strayed souls to the fold of Christ, for the general peace of Christendom, and for the blessing of God upon this nation.' Now what have you to object to, or be scandalized at, in these conditions, unless you shrink from our prayers? I know, from experience, that the Protestant poor do not shrink from our money, nor are afraid to wear the clothes we provide for them."

"In what you have stated there is nothing unreasonable. I will not, therefore, trouble you further on this head, but content myself with reminding you of the other objections."

"I was in hopes that you had forgotten them," said Frances, "for I have talked till I am tired. Do, Maria, answer her ladyship's troublesome observations, or she will boast that we admit them to be well founded. Yet no; you will be too gentle with her; I will endeavor to perform

the task myself. Your ladyship calls the Catholic church intolerant, because she maintains that there is only one true religion. In this she is justified by St. Paul, your favorite apostle, who says, in his 4th epistle to the Ephesians, ‘There is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism.’ Truth is but one; whatever is at variance with it, must be error. Jesus Christ instructed his apostles in the doctrines they were commanded to inculcate: he promised to be with them, and to teach them all truth to the end of the world. Whoever wilfully opposes those doctrines, or frames to himself a religion different from that which was taught by the apostles, must necessarily be wrong. It is the spirit of charity, therefore, and not that of intolerance, which induces the church boldly to exalt her voice, and proclaim to all nations that there can be but one true church, and that if any venture to die out of the communion of this *Catholic church*, it is at the evident risk of their eternal well-being. The opinion of divines, however, is, that invincible ignorance, joined to a disposition to embrace the truth, and strenuous efforts to discover it, will be acceptable to God. He, alone, is the searcher of hearts, and Catholics have no authority, nor must they presume, to pass judgment on any individual. You now perceive that we are not taught to condemn all those who die out of our communion. The Catholic church likewise embraces within her pale all infants duly baptized, whatever may be the religion of their parents, or the persons who baptize them; and if these children die before they have attained knowledge sufficient to discern truth from error, provided they be free from the guilt of mortal sin, there can be no doubt of their salvation.”

“All Christians belong to the Catholic church who do not reject the apostles’ creed,” said Lady Harcourt.—“How can that be,” exclaimed Frances, “when you refuse to acknowledge her authority, and reject many articles of her faith?”—“We reject only the faith of the church of Rome,” returned her ladyship, “and not that of the Catholic church.”—“The Catholic church and the church of Rome are one and the same: there cannot be two churches entitled to the ancient and honorable name of Catholic. Your ladyship has merely to consult the annals of ecclesiastical history, and you will discover that all who at any time separated from the communion of the church of Rome, abandoned the title of Catholic, or universal,

and, to distinguish themselves, assumed the name of their founders; as, Arians, Lutherans, Whitfieldites. The church of England is an exception, because the reformers could not agree whose rule of faith they should adopt, and"—“Hence it follows,” interrupted Lady Harcourt, “that she is Catholic.”

“Impossible!” rejoined Frances, quickly; “for the definition of the word *Protestant* is, ‘one who protests against the church of Rome.’”—“The errors of that church,” said Lady Harcourt.—“The alleged errors,” replied Frances; “for how could a church which, as I have repeatedly shown you, was guided in all things by the Spirit of truth, fall into error? But it is useless to make any further remarks to your ladyship. Remember, however, that, after these little discussions, I shall not be able to shelter you under the plea of invincible ignorance; and, therefore, if you do not make more serious efforts to ascertain the truth, you must take the consequences.”

Lady Harcourt smiled, and, observing that Frances was preparing to leave the room, told her, that she had not yet defended the arbitrary introduction of confession. “Neither shall I make the attempt,” was the hasty reply. “If it has been introduced since the time of the apostles, the writings of the reformers will, of course, furnish you with the date, the name of the place in which, and of the person by whom, it was introduced; and so successfully introduced, too, as to become the general practice of all Christendom. Till your ladyship’s profound researches have enabled you to accomplish this task, do not venture to abuse the Catholic doctrine of confession. Good bye.”



## CHAPTER XLV.

THE death of the aged Joseph Berry, about this time, was an event that caused much regret to the noble inhabitants of Alton Park, and to all in its vicinity. The good Joseph, for so he was usually called by those who spoke of him, was highly valued by Sir James and his family; indeed, his eminent virtues secured their esteem, and they lamented his death as that of a dear friend. By Maria Alton and Jane Mordaunt his loss was particularly felt. He had been the depository of their ea y sorrows and the

spiritual instructor of their riper years. They paid him frequent visits, as his cottage was but a few minutes' walk from the Hall, and seldom returned without having derived some advantage from his edifying conversation.

He was eighty years of age; his body was rather feeble, but his active mind retained all its vigor, and he was still a pleasing companion. The fire of divine charity, which burnt in his bosom, animated his words and influenced his actions, he earnestly wished to communicate to others. The young and the aged were the especial objects of his zeal. Were any of his neighbors ill? Joseph cheered the bed of sickness. Was the hand of affliction heavy upon them? He sweetened the bitter cup by exhorting them to accept it with resignation. His small income more than sufficed for his limited wants, and the overplus was devoted to the relief of the poor. The orphan and the child of sorrow always found in him a protector and a friend. His death, therefore, was considered as a public calamity, and deplored with tears of undissembled grief.

"The old men," said Sir James Alton, "exclaim, 'We have lost our model—the soother of our cares—the encourager of our hopes; him on whom we depended to close our eyes, and teach us how to die!' The young, who have grown into manhood under his fostering care, bewail him as a tender father; as a friend to whom they could freely communicate the particulars of all their troubles, and from whose excellent counsels they were sure to derive improvement and consolation. 'Who will now,' they say, 'support our feeble virtue, animate us to perseverance, raise our drooping courage when we fall, and exhort us to repent of our misdeeds? He is gone, whose presence alone was a signal to us to raise our hearts to heaven; for it was his earnest endeavor to inspire us with religious feelings. 'Love, my dear children,' would he say, speaking of divine charity, 'love is the shortest road to perfection; it sweetens toil, eases pain and enhances pleasure. Let God be the supreme object of your love, and work diligently in order to please Him; be assured my divine Master will amply reward your zeal.'

"'I, more than all others,' said a respectable-looking man, overwhelmed with grief, 'have reason to deplore his death. I came a stranger to this village, and he assisted me with money till I could procure work. He found me ignorant, and, what was worse, an abandoned sinner.

This did not repress, but rather increased, his tenderness towards me: he meditated my conversion, and with unwearied patience labored to secure it. The grace of God, through his good prayers, triumphed, and I relinquished, by degrees, my vicious habits. When I used to regret that I could not read, 'My good friend,' would he tenderly say, 'human learning is not necessary to salvation. Listen diligently to the instructions of your pastor, be faithful to the inspirations of divine grace, carefully avoid sin, and you will receive from above whatever knowledge is required for your state of life. All nature, as a book written in large characters, will teach you to know, to love and to think of God.

"Behold in yon great luminary, whose effulgence dazzles our sight, a faint image of the glory and majesty of God—in its beams, which cheer and enliven every created object, an emblem of his universal beneficence. The birds, warmed by its genial rays, and inspired to sing the praises of their Maker, should teach us to elevate our thoughts, from time to time, to heaven, and, by fervent aspirations of love, to pour forth our thanks for the blessings we enjoy. The fertility of the soil, which supplies us with bread—the beauty and variety of the fruits and flowers, given to please the eye and regale the taste, are special marks of his paternal bounty, and ought to awaken sentiments of gratitude in our hearts. The fearful roaring of the tempest, which demonstrates his power, should also remind us of his presence, and make us tremble at the effects of his insulted justice, if we refuse to love him and keep his commandments.'

"By every means in his power," continued Sir James, "has this good man labored to improve the temporal and spiritual condition of all who came within his sphere. He has sent his good works before him, and is gone to receive the reward which a long life of virtue has obtained for him in heaven."

"A happy death," said Lady Alton, "the promised recompense of a holy life, has already secured him his crown; or, should a few spots remain, the effects of human weakness, they are, I trust, so inconsiderable as to be effaced by a very short purgation. His virtues were such as we are called upon to practise, whatever rank we may hold in society. In his actions there was nothing extraor-

dinary, nothing that seemed to distinguish them from those of many other persons."

"Why, then, mamma," interrupted Frances, "are not all who lead a moral life equally holy?"—"Because," said her mother, "as I have remarked to you before, 'they do not sanctify their actions by doing them, as he did, for the love of God, and thus imparting to them all the perfection of which they are capable.'"

"Are you of opinion, mamma, that none will go to heaven who are less perfect than Joseph Berry?"—"Far be it from me to think so," answered Lady Alton; "or I must exclude myself, and thousands who confidently hope for admittance to the abodes of bliss. Of this, however, the gospel assures us, that nothing defiled can enter heaven; and, consequently, if we will not endeavor to avoid sin, overcome self-love, practise humility, and, in short, 'walk before the Lord without reproof,' as did Zachary and Elizabeth, we must endure in the next life the punishment we have been unwilling to inflict on ourselves in this. In purgatory, the justice of God will exact satisfaction for the smaller sins of which we die guilty; and our sufferings there being without merit, we shall continue in that prison till we have paid the last farthing."

"I tremble at the thought of what I may have to undergo in the next life!" said Jane; "though the idea of a middle state is certainly very consoling."

"Undoubtedly it is," returned Lady Alton; "and though the pains are very acute, yet I think we may derive comfort from reflecting that our salvation will then be secure, as we shall no longer be in a condition to offend. We shall bear our punishment with humility, from a consciousness of having deserved it—with patience, however long its duration—and with an ardent love, which will at once add to and assuage our pains. Divine hope also will support us, and inspire us with courage, because, though banished for a while from the presence of God, we are still tenderly beloved, and destined to everlasting happiness."

"Have you any idea, mamma, what length of time the soul of dear Joseph may have to remain in purgatory?" asked Maria—"None whatever, my love," answered her mother, smiling at the simplicity of the question; "but if I were to hazard an opinion, I should conclude that, from the holiness of Joseph's life, his banishment will not



be of long continuance; for a soul that burns on earth with the fire of divine love, will not be long detained in that of purgatory. "The only mark of real friendship we can show to our deceased friends, is to offer our fervent solicitations at the throne of mercy in their behalf, and to procure masses to be said for their repose. This is, also, an act of charity, most pleasing to God, who is desirous to have his justice disarmed, in order that he may receive into his heavenly kingdom those predestinated souls, before the period otherwise marked for their admission. Besides prayer, alms, fasts, and other mortifications, may be applied to the assistance of the souls in purgatory."

"But suppose those for whom we pray are not in need of our prayers," said Jane.—"We shall not, on that account, lose the merit of our benevolent intention," resumed her ladyship; "since it is piously believed that God, in his infinite mercy, will apply the redundancy of our good works or prayers to other suffering souls who may be in a condition to benefit by them. Our charity for the dead ought to be generous and universal, and not limited to our immediate friends or relatives."

"Suggest to me, then, how my supplications may become more extensively useful," said Maria, "and yet be confined to some specified objects, in order to fix my attention, and excite me to pray for them with more earnestness."

"Cultivate in your soul, my love," replied her mother, "a tender and compassionate regard for the afflicted souls in purgatory, and your heart will dictate the best means of contributing to their relief. It is possible there are many, perhaps thousands, of whom no one thinks. Make these the object of your petitions; as also your relations, your acquaintances—those who have known you, or desired you to pray for them—those who have lately died, and such as are near the termination of their exile, that they may be speedily introduced into the presence of God, and give glory to his name. Remember always, that as often as we implore grace or mercy for ourselves or others, it must be through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, which alone are capable of attracting the divine regard."

"There is something consolatory, and, I think, reasonable in the idea of a middle state," said Lady Harcourt, who had been attentive to the preceding conversation; "but the Protestant church has rejected it, on the just

grounds of its being a mere human invention, unsupported by the evidence of Scripture, or even of antiquity; and introduced only about the time of St. Austin, obviously for the purpose of enriching the church."

"This is the perverted opinion of Protestants," replied Sir James, "not the doctrine of Catholics, as your ladyship may easily learn, by having recourse to our catechism; perhaps, Maria," he continued, turning to his eldest daughter, "the knowledge you have derived from that source will enable you to defend this article of faith, or opinion shall I call it?"

"Oh, of faith, papa, most assuredly," said Maria; "our catechism teaches us, that there is a middle state, where souls that die in the guilt of venial sin, and such as have not, on earth, made full atonement for the mortal sins of which they have obtained the pardon, are confined, and doomed to suffer, till they have completely satisfied the justice of God; and this place is called purgatory."

"There is no mention of any such place in either the Old or New Testament," rejoined Lady Harcourt. "Granted," said Maria; "but though there is not the term, there is mention, in both, of the thing signified. In the Old Testament, we read, that the pious and valiant general, Judas Machabeus, sent money to Jerusalem, requesting that sacrifices might be offered in behalf of his soldiers slain in battle. And, in the New, we learn from our Saviour's own lips, that there is one sin which will not be forgiven, either in this world, or in the next; and this, beyond doubt, implies a purgatory; otherwise, as St. Austin remarks, the words of Christ would not be true, since there is no remission of sin either in hell or heaven. St. Paul, too, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of some that shall be saved, 'yet so as by fire.' Besides these scripture proofs, this doctrine has the voice of antiquity in its favor, having been handed down to us by tradition, even from the time of the apostles, and been received as an article of Catholic faith, in every country where the religion of Jesus Christ and his apostles has been promulgated."

"As our opinions on this subject differ," returned Lady Harcourt, when Maria paused, "it will be as well not to contest the point. I will only observe, that Protestants do not acknowledge the Book of Machabees, so that your proof from the Old Testament is nugatory. It is my firm

belief, that when we die, our condition is absolutely and immediately fixed."

"I am sorry your ladyship rejects, without due consideration," said Sir James, "an article of our faith so well authenticated, and at the same time, as you have already allowed, so consoling and reasonable. It is reasonable, because, according to the rules of moral justice, a delinquent convicted of a small transgression of the law, is not punished with the same severity as he who is guilty of a capital offence. And shall infinite goodness have less regard to justice and to mercy, than the creature he has formed? Certainly not. It is consoling, because the pain inflicted lasts not for ever. A period will arrive when the gates of the prison will be opened, and the predestinated soul be freed from her chains."

"What a happy moment!" cried Jane; "the sufferings that are past will be instantly forgotten, and the enraptured spirit will rejoice in endless felicity! Although your ladyship condemns our doctrine now, I hope the time is not distant, when you will feel disposed to inquire seriously after the truth, with a view to embrace it."

"I am satisfied with the religion I profess; yours imposes too great a restraint on the senses, it requires too much perfection for me."

"You are not the only Protestant that has made the same remark, my dear madam," said Sir James, "and I consider it a compliment to the religion of Jesus Christ, to which no system introduced by modern innovators can possibly lay claim; the perfection it requires in its followers is a strong proof of its divine origin."

"Well, my good friend," said Lady Harcourt, extending her hand to Sir James, "though we differ with respect to the road that leads to heaven, I hope we shall ultimately be so happy as to meet there. I am for following a direct and level path, where I can see my way, through the medium of the Scriptures; you a rugged and intricate one."—"But the more secure of the two," interrupted Sir James; "as from the words of our Saviour in the inspired writings, to which you refer, I learn, that 'narrow is the way, and strait the gate that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it.' We read also, that 'many are called, but few are chosen.' We should, therefore, labor seriously to make our calling and election sure,"

"When is our dear Joseph to be buried, papa?" inquired Miss Alton.—"In three days, my love. His corpse is placed this evening in the chapel, and it will continue there till Saturday."

"I hope," she resumed, "the lid of the coffin is not fastened, as it will afford both Jane and myself a melancholy pleasure to see him once more, and——"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lady Harcourt, in an accent of terror; "you must be quite a heroine, if you have courage sufficient to look at any one who is dead; for my part, I cannot bear to witness the passing of a funeral, and I banish from my mind, as much as possible, the gloomy thought of death. My two girls are precisely the same; they would not sleep in a house which contains a corpse for all the world!"

"So then," said Sir James, "they would abandon parents, husband, children, at the awful moment of dissolution, and suffer strangers to receive the last breath, and close the eyes, of their departing friend. Excellent wives and mothers!"

"You are severe, Sir James," said Lady Harcourt.—"You must now be convinced, papa," interrupted Frances, "that I am not the only person who has a horror of the grave; I dare not look on a corpse, and I shudder at the idea of death, even at a distance. I am sure, if you compel me to go into the chapel whilst poor Berry is there, I shall faint away."

"As there is no obligation," resumed her father, "I shall impose no command; you are not ignorant of my wishes. With regard to your proposed fainting-fit, you may, should you join us, act as you think most advisable. In case it comes on, I shall place you gently on your back, and leave you to recover at your own convenience. I never compassionate those temporary indispositions in your sex, which are produced by affectation and ridiculous fears."

Frances was disconcerted. She had often, in former instances, been reproved for affectation; but as its folly and weakness were clearly pointed out by her amiable parents, she had, in a great measure, overcome the propensity, and seldom betrayed any symptoms of a failing, which is sure to excite the ridicule and disgust of those who witness it. Recovering herself, but bathed in tears, she exclaimed, "You are acquainted, papa, with my

unconquerable fear of death, and my horror of every thing that leads to the thought of it."

"I am, my love," said the tender father, folding her in his arms, "and am grieved to find that you have not hitherto exerted yourself to subdue it. It is a weakness which, if indulged, will make the very life to which you cling with so much earnestness, a complete burthen to you; it will unfit you for the duties you may be called on to fulfil, and render you insupportable to yourself and others. That which cannot be avoided, should be met with becoming fortitude. The stroke of death is inevitable; and, how anxiously soever you may labor to escape it, it will pursue you till it has performed its destined office, and levelled you with the dust."

"Painful thought!" cried Frances, shuddering, "that we must leave all the splendor and enjoyments of this life, and every one that is dear to us, to be shut up in the solitary tomb!"

"Then speedily dismiss the painful thought," returned her mother, "for the sentiments you have uttered are fit only for the lips of a heathen, who has no hope of a future existence."—"It is that future existence I dread," replied Frances; "here I am happy, but I am ignorant what will be my condition in the next world."

"You deceive yourself, my child," said Lady Alton; "it is an inordinate love of the good things of this life, and not a salutary fear of punishment in the next, that causes in you this reprehensible horror of death."

"Is it sinful, madam, to fear death?" inquired Miss Mordaunt.—"Certainly, when that fear proceeds from an undue attachment to our bodies, and to the perishable goods we possess here below. This is very different from that Christian fear, tempered by hope, which has been manifested by many holy saints, when they contemplated the infinite sanctity of God, and the rigor of his inscrutable judgments."

"Do you not think it a mark of ingratitude to God," said Maria, "to be so unwilling to quit this world, when he has provided such enjoyments for us in the next?"—"Assuredly I do. Death is the only gate through which we can arrive at that splendid inheritance, which Christ has purchased for us at the dear price of his blood. Death alone can give us possession of the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, where the just are crowned

with diadems of eternal glory, and where they will love, see and enjoy God for evermore. Surely this bright prospect beyond the grave should induce us to descend into it with courage. How much wiser, then, will it be, my dear Frances, to habituate yourself to the contemplation of that solemn hour which, sooner or later, must arrive; as no anxiety can prevent the fatal arrow from being discharged, nor any caution divert it from its mark, when once it is on the wing."

"But is not the love of life natural to all, mamma?" resumed Frances, "and particularly so to young persons, who are surrounded by every thing that renders life desirable?"—"I admit that it is a natural feeling," said her mother, "and, in a certain degree, it is even necessary, to enable us to fulfil the designs of our Creator. We are also strictly forbidden to destroy, or do any thing to shorten it, but we must wait the good pleasure of God to reclaim his gift. Our love of life should be moderate and religious, since we are not placed in this world as in a permanent dwelling; but are only travellers, journeying on to an everlasting habitation, in regions of bliss or misery, according to our deserts!"

"Then, mamma, death must be terrible!" exclaimed Frances.

"Yes, my child, I grant it," continued her ladyship; "but it is so only to unrepenting, despairing sinners; to those who have attached themselves so closely to the pleasures and enjoyments of this transient state, as to forfeit, for their uncertain possession, all claim to eternal happiness; to those who have forgotten that heaven is to be obtained only by violence, and by the strict observance of the law of God. To such as these, death is, indeed, terrible, since it separates them from all their soul held dear, and plunges them into the abyss of unutterable wo. To the pious Christian, on the other hand, death appears far less formidable; he even welcomes it as the term of his labors and mortifications, as the herald of peace, announcing to him that his trials are over, that his combat is finished, and that he will speedily be crowned with the wreath of victory. He feared death when at a distance; but profiting by the counsel of the wise man, he cherished the remembrance, and it preserved him from sin. On its near approach, therefore, his fears are tranquillized by hope, by confidence, and by love. He knows that his

Redeemer shed for his salvation the last drop of his blood, that his guardian angel, the blessed Virgin, and the saints, are pleading for him, and that his eternal Father, infinite in mercy, is fondly waiting to receive him into his arms, to realize his hopes, and to reward his merits. This animating prospect inspires him with courage, and, strengthened by the sacraments, he willingly and calmly yields up his soul into the hands of Him who created it."

"It was in sentiments of confidence like these that the pious Joseph breathed his last," said Sir James.

"He was very happy," rejoined Maria; "and I am sure, if Frances had heard him on one occasion, when he described to Jane and me, in vivid colors, the splendor of the heavenly Jerusalem, the glory, joy and happiness of the blessed, she would even have wished with us to die immediately, that she might be put in possession of it."

"Tell me what he said."—"Impossible, my dear sister," returned Maria; "for though I were able to repeat the words, I never could breathe into them the fire, the energy, with which his were animated. They filled me with delight, and I resolved to sacrifice every thing rather than lose my soul, and the eternal enjoyments which are to be the portion of the elect."

"Treasure up his words in your heart, my love," said Lady Alton, "and be assured that, however brilliant an idea of heaven and its blessed inhabitants, this holy man was able to convey to you, it still falls infinitely short of the reality; for St. Paul assures us, that the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, and that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the exquisite delights, which God has prepared for those who love Him, and keep his commandments. Courage, then, my dear Frances; make the same generous resolution that your sister has formed; and when you are disheartened by the fear of death, comfort your troubled soul by the recollection of the happiness designed for you in the land of the living, if you here correspond to the impulses of divine grace. It will be prudent to wean your affections from the short-lived enjoyments of the earth, and to fix them on those which are celestial and eternal."

"After all that you have advanced this evening on the subject of death, I am sorry that I gave utterance to my childish apprehensions," said Lady Harcourt; "for I per-

ceive that excessive fear is quite as unbecoming as stoical indifference. I will endeavor to make your advice to Frances beneficial to myself, and form a habit of reflecting, with more composure, on an event that is unavoidable, and which no human foresight or precaution can, for any length of time, delay. Allow me to ask, what the sacraments are to which you alluded. I know of none but the 'Lord's Supper.' "

"The sacraments of penance, the holy eucharist, and extreme unction," said Lady Alton.

"The last you have named, I am totally ignorant of," returned her ladyship; "perhaps one of my young friends will favor me with an explanation of it."

"It is," said Miss Alton, "the anointing with oil (sanctified by prayer for that purpose) those persons who are in danger of death by sickness."

"And do you call this a sacrament?" asked Lady Harcourt.

"Certainly," resumed Maria, "because it has all the necessary conditions of one; namely, its ordinance from Christ, outward form or ceremony, and inward application of divine grace to the souls of those who receive it worthily."

"You have no proof, from the New Testament, that it is of divine origin," said Lady Harcourt; "for there is no mention of any such thing or term."

"Your ladyship is under a mistake," rejoined Maria, "as the thing signified, which is the anointing with oil, is clearly expressed in the fifth chapter of St. James, where we read, 'Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him.' Besides this scriptural authority, we have that also of tradition, by which it is easily shown to have been the practice of all ages, from the time of the apostles."

"And do you really expect," said Lady Harcourt, "to derive any advantage from this ceremony, which the Protestant church, in its sound judgment, has laid aside?"

"Undoubtedly we do," answered Maria. "The sacraments are the principal channels, or means, by which Almighty God bestows his graces on the soul; and none of them, when duly administered and worthily received,



can fail to produce this effect. The benefits of the sacrament of extreme unction are very great, and worthy of our highest regard and consideration. Our catechism teaches us, that it is administered to dying persons, to strengthen them in their passage out of this life into a better. Its effects are to remit sin, and to restore health, if it be expedient; or to comfort the soul in her last agony against despair, and defend her from the power of her enemies. The matter of this sacrament is oil, solemnly blessed by a bishop, every year, on Maundy Thursday."

"I very much doubt the restorative effect which you ascribe to it," said Lady Harcourt; "but may I ask in what form it is administered?"

"The priest, extending his hands over the sick person, says, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may all power of the devil be extinct in thee, by the imposition of our hands, and by the invocation of all the holy angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the holy saints! Amen.' Then dipping his thumb in the holy oil, he anoints the sick person, in the form of a cross, on the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet, saying, on each application, 'May our Lord, by this holy anointing and his own most tender mercy, pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by thy sight, hearing,' &c."

"Can extreme unction be conferred more than once?" inquired Frances.—"Yes," answered Lady Alton; "we may receive it as often as we are in danger of death, even during the same illness, if it be of long continuance, when the patient, having recovered a little, has again relapsed. I must also remark, my dear madam," addressing Lady Harcourt, "that though you affect to question the power of this wholesome sacrament in restoring health, it is nevertheless true that the advantages of it, in this regard, have been repeatedly felt and acknowledged by various persons, reduced almost to the last extremity."

"Dear Joseph," said Maria, "gave us an affecting example of the earnestness with which we should desire, and the devotion with which we ought to receive, this sacrament."

"The advantages of this holy anointing," resumed Lady Alton, "being so great, it is, I think, much to be lamented, that it is not applied for at the moment when a disease is pronounced dangerous, since the sufferer loses by the delay

much of its consoling influence, and of the strength which it confers to bear a long and severe illness with resignation. The dispositions with which it ought to be received are, a lively faith, an ardent wish to insure the sanctification of the soul, a pious hope that it may restore health to the body, if it be expedient, a perfect submission to the will of God, and a sincere sorrow for all our offences. How infinitely we are obliged, my dear children, to our beneficent Lord, who has thus instituted a sacrament to support us at the time of our greatest need, to efface the remains of sin, to give us strength to resist, to the last moment, the attacks of our spiritual enemies, and to inspire us with confidence to meet our just but merciful Judge! It ought to be the subject of our frequent and earnest supplications, that we may be preserved from sudden death, now so frequent, and obtain the happiness of receiving worthily all the rites of the church—rites so consoling, that they attract the regard even of Protestants, who witness their administration or notice their effects, and cause them to admire the peace and serenity of a good Catholic, supported, at that awful crisis, by the powerful aids which his religion affords.”

Lady Harcourt was on the point of submitting a few remarks, when the entrance of a servant with a note, requesting permission for the young ladies to pass the following afternoon at Woody Lodge, changed the conversation, and dispersed the gloom which, till that moment, had shaded the brow of Frances. Making an effort, however, to resume her native cheerfulness, she assured her parents that she would endeavor to overcome her blameable timidity, and show, by her attendance in the chapel as usual, that their admonitions were not thrown away.

“The contest with my feelings,” she continued, “will, I am sure, be rather arduous; but I hope, my dear papa, you will not have the trouble to lay me on my back, and be tempted to abandon me, without pity, to my fate.”

Tea being ended, music, the ordinary diversion of the evening, was proposed. The young ladies made the arrangements which were required, and a charming domestic concert, vocal and instrumental, beguiled the time agreeably, till the great clock, proclaiming the unwelcome hour of ten, summoned the juvenile portion of the family to repose.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

"My beloved pupils," replied the governess to an observation made by Lady Harcourt, on seeing the young ladies frequently at work for the poor, "have been taught the value of time, and the merit of good actions, performed from a right motive."

"I am charmed with the amiable qualities I daily discover in them," resumed her ladyship; "and lament to think that when they have made their *entrée*, as it is called, into the fashionable world, it will not be in their power to continue these benevolent occupations. There will be so many objects to engage their attention, that needlework must be laid aside altogether."

"Not altogether, I trust," said Miss Hargrave. "When industrious habits are once formed in early life on virtuous principles, they will seldom be wholly neglected afterwards. These young ladies, however, are furnished with abundant resources, without needlework. Books, music, the pencil, and the pen, will afford them a variety of employments suitable to all occasions."

"When I reflect," continued Lady Harcourt, "that only four hours a day have been devoted to study, I am astonished at the progress they have made in the polite accomplishments, as well as in the more solid and useful branches of education. You must either have had wonderful pupils, or you possess a method of instruction peculiar to yourself."

"Neither the one nor the other," returned Miss Hargrave, smiling. "I found my pupils such as children generally are, at the age when I received them under my tuition—not far advanced in learning, nor entirely without faults; but their parents acted in concert with me, and four hours' study, regularly pursued, have enabled us to effect much. Every possible inducement was employed to excite emulation, and prevent the necessity of punishment; but when the former was ineffectual, the latter has never, from mistaken indulgence, been withheld. To facilitate improvement, and to render study less fatiguing and irksome, their lessons were all explained and simplified, as much as the subject would admit. Not being required to teach either music or drawing, I had leisure to attend more particularly to the cultivation of the mind;

and as the diligence of the young ladies corresponded with my solicitude, they have succeeded in attaining the proficiency which calls forth your surprise. A portion of the afternoon, as your ladyship has remarked, is occasionally employed in drawing, or in practising music; and the remainder, though not devoted to books, is so regulated as not to be altogether barren of instruction."

"My friends have been fortunate in meeting with such a governess for their children, and——"

"They are themselves entitled to the greater share of the merit," interrupted Miss Hargrave; "for, by the influence of their own example, and by investing me with authority to punish, when correction was expedient, they have contributed more than they are perhaps aware of, to perfect the education which they were anxious to bestow on their daughters; and as they were desirous that they should be instructed on a plan recommended by the amiable and celebrated Fenelon, they have, on all occasions, co-operated with my feeble efforts. I have, on my part, made it my constant aim to forward, to the utmost, the improvement of my interesting charge, well knowing that I stand accountable, in a great measure, both to God and the world, for their future conduct. That I might have nothing to answer for on this head (the dear children being entirely under my control), I have consulted the best writers on the subject of education, and have earnestly implored the light of the Divine Spirit, to direct me in this important task. But to the influence of our holy religion on the hearts of my pupils, I am most essentially indebted for my success, as it disposed them to obey my commands, and receive my lessons with docility."

"I was quite charmed," said Lady Harcourt, "with our little concert, a few evenings ago. The young ladies do great credit to their master. Frances plays extremely well, both on the pianoforte and the harp. Maria has a less brilliant execution; but she is very correct, and her voice, though not so powerful as her sister's, is soft and melodious. Had Frances allotted more time to practice, she might have become a first-rate performer. I cannot exactly understand why her mother should have endeavored to circumscribe such splendid abilities."

"Her ladyship acts, in every instance, from superior motives," said Miss Hargrave; "and, far from wishing to exhibit her beloved child as a phenomenon, by too assiduous

a cultivation of this pleasing talent, has rather sought to check the great eagerness with which she would have applied to it, lest it should prove a source of vanity, and cause her to neglect matters of more importance. When the music-master requested that the young ladies might be allowed to practise three or more hours a day, her ladyship objected to the proposal, and limited the time to two. She observed to him, that as the rank and fortune of her daughters precluded the necessity of cultivating their talents with a view to obtain a livelihood, she had no anxiety that they should display the skill of a professor. She made a similar remark with respect to drawing. When the master pointed out the excellent taste of Maria, and the pre-eminence which she might attain, her ladyship answered, 'I do not wish Miss Alton to become an artist, but only that she should be so far mistress of the art, that it may furnish her occasionally with an agreeable employment.' Thus you perceive, my dear madam, that when too much attention is not bestowed on one pursuit, diligent study during four hours of the day, and the judicious regulation of the remainder, will enable a young person of tolerable capacity to acquire, by the time she has completed her seventeenth year, the knowledge which is necessary to form an accomplished woman."

"Your view of the case is certainly exemplified in the elegant daughters of my friend; but I question much," said Lady Harcourt, "whether it will apply generally. What means did you pursue to reconcile your pupils to the habit of working with their needle? This is now an employment so unfashionable; it is so repugnant to the natural indolence of youth, and enters so little into the plan of modern education, that I am astonished to witness the pleasure with which they take it up; especially as they are aware that the finances of Sir James can readily supply all their wants."

"It is to the judicious perseverance of Lady Alton," replied Miss Hargrave, "that they are indebted for their knowledge of an art, which has cheerfully beguiled many an hour that would otherwise have been tedious. She shows herself, on all occasions, superior to the frivolity of fashionable prejudices; and while she pays a due regard, in things which are indifferent, to the customs of the age, she never forgets that a period will arrive, when a strict account will be demanded of the employment of time. To

prevent her daughters from experiencing the multiplied evils which too often flow from habitual indolence, and to inspire them with a love of occupation, she has had recourse to various stimulants. When once a habit of industry was formed, it was easy to direct it into the proper channel. To work for the poor or the altar is now, as your ladyship has observed, the ordinary destination of their leisure hours, and they have seldom time to accomplish all the good works which they project."

"I suppose you have latterly made the young woman very useful," said Lady Harcourt.—"What young woman?" asked the governess in an accent of surprise; "I have had no assistant."—"I allude to Miss Mordaunt," returned her ladyship, rather disappointed at not being understood. "I heard she was to be educated for a governess; but I remark, that she is treated by every person with as much respect, as if she were one of the baronet's daughters. She will find a mortifying difference in her situation, when she meets with an engagement."

"I am happy to inform your ladyship, that Sir James's ward will not be exposed to the trial. Her amiable comportment has endeared her so much to the family, that they will not consent to her quitting them; she will, therefore, be amply provided for. Had her father lived a few years longer, he would have been able to leave his child a comfortable sufficiency; but in the house of her noble patrons, she has been fortunate enough to meet with friends, who have never made her feel the bitterness of dependence, nor aggravated her sorrow for a parent's loss, by reminding her of their favors."

By this time they had reached the hall, and Lady Harcourt expressed a wish to accompany the governess to the school-room. The young ladies were not there; but at half past three, the sound of cheerful voices proclaimed their approach.

"You will excuse our being later than usual," said Miss Alton, as they entered. "On quitting you to proceed to our gardens, we unexpectedly met with papa, and requested his company."—"I saw you with Sir James, my love," returned Miss Hargrave, "and therefore was not uneasy on account of your absence."

"Well, my sweet girls," said Lady Harcourt, extending a hand to each as they advanced, not excepting Miss Mordaunt, "I have not seen you these two days; I hope you

enjoyed your visit yesterday. My pernicious habit of sleeping to so late an hour in the morning, never permits me to have the pleasure of meeting you at the breakfast-table; but when the weather becomes warm, I purpose to change my plan, and rise earlier."

"My sedate monitress," said Frances, laughing, and pointing to her governess, "assures me, that bad habits, long indulged, are not easily overcome. I therefore predict, that your ladyship will not improve in this regard quite so speedily; I give you at least two years."

"It is true," said Lady Harcourt, "that I have no inducement to rise early, as the day always appears long enough for the business I have to accomplish; such as dressing, visiting, reading, &c. I have, however, received lessons here on the profitable employment of time, which I shall endeavor to turn to my advantage, and, though late in the day, make some strenuous efforts to reform. I must now remind you, that I have not yet heard the explanation of the whole of your festivals; for I took up your directory yesterday, and remarked in the calendar several which you have not noticed. I do not expect to see you again till we meet at Paris, and in that gay city there will be no leisure for discourse of so serious a character."

"We are to commence with August," said Frances; "and if any have been omitted, they may stand over till a future opportunity. Begin then, my dear Maria, and do not make any long remarks, lest her ladyship should not have the pleasure of wrangling with me about some point of doctrine, that has been successfully defended a thousand times."

Silence being obtained, Maria thus began:—

"The 10th of August is observed as a day of devotion in honor of St. Lawrence, deacon to Pope Zistus. So strong was his desire of martyrdom, that when he beheld the holy pontiff conducted to execution, he lamented and wept that he was left behind, as one unworthy to suffer for the Christian faith. After a few days, however, his wishes were accomplished, and the prediction of the holy pope was fulfilled, on his being summoned to appear before the tyrant. He had deposited in the hands of the poor the treasures of the church, which its avaricious persecutors were longing to possess, and this circumstance excited their rage to such a

degree, as to induce them to wreak their utmost vengeance on this innocent victim. He was placed on a gridiron, and cruelly broiled to death. In the midst of his torments, he cried out to his executioners, 'This side is done enough; turn, and eat.' His ardent love of God, and his anxious wish to suffer for the name of Jesus, enabled him, with the assistance of divine grace, to overcome the utmost malice of his enemies, and to secure a resplendent crown of glory, the promised reward of fidelity and perseverance. His example should encourage us to support cheerfully, for the love of God, whatever trials may fall to our lot, fully assured that our blessed Lord will himself uphold us, if we embrace them willingly, and endure them with patience for his sake.

"Next follows the feast of the Assumption, on the fifteenth, a holiday of obligation. On this day, the church celebrates the triumph and glory of the blessed mother of God, who, having paid the debt of nature, was joyfully received into heaven, and placed at the right hand of her divine Son."

"I do not understand the object of this festival," said Lady Harcourt, not waiting for Maria's explanation; "it is not inserted in our calendar. I know your church teaches, that the Virgin Mary, is, both body and soul, in heaven; but the Scripture is silent on the subject. May I, then, ask, what authority you have for this belief?"

"That of tradition," said Frances, "which Catholics are instructed to respect, as the medium by which various matters appertaining to faith, and likewise to discipline, have been handed down to us. We learn from our catechism, that the apostles preached and taught many things by word of mouth, which they never wrote, but which have been carefully preserved from generation to generation, even to the present time. This is called the unwritten word of God, which, when the church has pronounced upon it, we are bound to believe and venerate equally with the scripture or written word. Now, Maria, I will not again interrupt you; but I expected her ladyship would stumble at the word *tradition*, unless I offered my services to assist her by explaining it."

"You are sometimes rather hasty in your well-meant explanations, my dear sister," returned Maria; "her ladyship has started no objection: but to continue my short narrative. It is the universal sentiment of the church, though she has not defined it to be an article of faith, that



the mother of Jesus, after she had paid the debt of nature, was assumed, body and soul, into heaven. Tradition informs us, that most of the apostles were present at her happy death, and beheld her sacred remains securely deposited in the tomb. That the body of her who was spouse of the Holy Ghost, and mother to the Son of God, should be exempted from the common lot of the children of Adam, by a premature resurrection, and thus preserved from the corruption of the grave, seemed neither extraordinary nor repugnant to reason; and when the news of this wonder was circulated, it gained universal credit among the faithful.

"We have abundant cause to rejoice in the exaltation of the mother of God, and should congratulate her on the dignity to which she is raised. On earth, she was in no other respect distinguished from those who surrounded her, than by her humility and unspotted virtue. In heaven, her divine Son has raised her to the most exalted dignity, and crowned her with a resplendent diadem of glory. At the foot of the cross, her soul was transpierced with grief; but now, in the bosom of God, she enjoys a plenitude of unspeakable and never-ending delights.

"The 8th of September is observed in the church as a feast of devotion, to commemorate the nativity of the blessed Virgin."

"What," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "another festival in honor of the same person! They are so numerous that you must be completely tired of them."

"By no means," said Miss Alton; "we are seldom wearied with praising those we love, or hearing them praised by others. To the greater number of Catholics, the blessed Virgin is an object of particular esteem and veneration; the saints have invariably chosen her for their special patroness, and acknowledged, on diverse occasions, the benefits they have received from her powerful intercession."

"You are right, my love," added Miss Hargrave. "This devotion originated in the infancy of the church. The apostles looked upon her as their mother; and when she was withdrawn by death from mortal sight, their confidence in her protection increased rather than diminished. The same feelings have continued to prevail ever since, and innumerable temples have been erected to her honor in all ages, and in all countries. Young persons should

be early taught to implore her intercession, to choose her for their patroness, to confide their innocence and purity to her guardianship, and to make her youth the model of their own. But I will no longer detain you with my remarks: you have omitted the feast of St. Bartholomew on the 24th of August."

"St. Bartholomew," resumed Maria, "was one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, and he preached the faith in Arabia, where he was martyred, by being flayed alive, in defence of the doctrine which he promulgated."

"That is the last in the month of August," said Frances, interrupting her sister. "The instruction on this day is the same as on the feasts of the other apostles, and, therefore, it need not be repeated. Now for September: I hope it will not furnish many festivals: that of the Nativity of the blessed Virgin has been already spoken of. Papa, this morning, gave me a book to read, which he said would amuse us, and I am anxious to examine it."

"I must not wholly omit," said Maria, "the lessons taught us by the nativity of the blessed Virgin. They are, to imitate her love of retirement and prayer—her humility, modesty and unsullied chastity; and further, never to boast of our good works, abilities or extraction; but (if our rank oblige us to live in some degree of state) to humble ourselves interiorly, and reflect that circumstances, and not merit, have raised us above others. In company, we must not be loud, nor over-talkative; neither should we indulge in moroseness or melancholy silence."

"It is difficult to observe this happy medium," said Lady Harcourt.—"It is," replied the governess; "as we must often oppose the suggestions of self-love, by restraining our loquacity when we wish to talk, and by forcing ourselves to converse when silence would be more agreeable. Charity to our neighbor frequently demands this sacrifice. Proceed to the next festival."

"It is that of St. Matthew, apostle and evangelist," said Jane, taking up the subject. "Previous to his conversion, he was a publican, or one employed in collecting the customs on goods, &c.—a profession which was considered highly disreputable among the Jews. He was one day sitting in the custom-house, when Jesus passed, and said to him, 'Follow me.' Faithful to the divine inspiration that accompanied this heavenly call, he immediately arose, and left every thing to follow his divine Master. He was made

priest and bishop with the other apostles, at the time when our blessed Lord instituted the sacrifice of the new law, and he preached many years among the Hebrews. At length he passed over into Egypt, and the neighboring countries, converting thousands to the Christian faith. His Gospel was written in Hebrew, and he is honored in the church as a martyr on the 21st of September. From his conversion, we may learn that there is pardon for the greatest sinners, if they forsake their evil ways; and, also, that it is frequently of the utmost consequence to be faithful to the first impressions of divine grace, lest, slighting this heavenly call, it should never be repeated. We now come to the festival of St. Michael, commonly called Michaelmas-day. I think, Teresa, you can give us some account of this."

"I was reading, not long since," she immediately replied, "that this feast of St. Michael and the angels was established from the circumstance of a church being built in Rome to his honor, by Pope Boniface the Fourth. It was finished on the 29th of September, and dedicated to St. Michael; in commemoration of which event, the pope took occasion to order this festival to be observed every year throughout Christendom. St. Michael, the prince and chief of the heavenly host, is regarded as the special patron and defender of the church of God; and, as such, he ought to be particularly honored. We should likewise daily beg of him to assist us against the power of Satan, and, especially, to protect us at the hour of death."

"Catholics," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "are not satisfied with worshipping the saints; the angels also, I perceive, must have their share of homage. Why can you not be content with the sovereign mediatorship of Jesus Christ?"

"The stress which your ladyship lays on the word worshipping," said Frances, "betrays a desire on your part to enter into a new dispute, which I am not inclined to indulge. Enough has been already said on this point to convince you, that we worship no other than the one, true, and living God, who is to be loved, admired and honored in his works. The angels exist by his creative power; they are continually in his presence, and are the obedient ministers of his will. Our religion instructs us, therefore, that we may safely and profitably beg their intercession, and

we do nothing more. Go on, Teresa, if you have any thing further to say."

"The angels," continued Teresa, "are spiritual and intelligent beings, not united to bodies, though, when they have been commissioned to appear on earth, they have always assumed the form of man. The Scripture teaches us, that these blessed spirits are divided into nine orders, viz. cherubim, seraphim, thrones, principalities, powers, dominations, virtues, archangels and angels. On the feast of St. Michael, we ought to congratulate the angels on the glory they enjoy, and unite with them in acts of love and thanksgiving to God. We should entreat them to obtain for us the grace to become as obedient to the will of God, and as zealous for his glory, as they are."

"Before you proceed to another subject," interrupted Miss Hargrave, "let us make a few remarks on the feast of the angel guardians."—"It is not, I think, a day of devotion," said Frances, smiling, "and, therefore, does not enter into our engagement."

"I cannot allow the 2d of October to pass unnoticed," said Miss Hargrave, "although it is not marked in the calendar as a day of devotion. It is the doctrine of the Catholic church, that we have each an angel assigned us by the Almighty, to watch our steps, and guide us in safety through this land of perils and temptations. To the protection of this vigilant guardian, we are all infinitely beholden; and though we are not commanded by the church to observe this day as a festival, she nevertheless celebrates it herself by a particular office, and exhorts her children to testify their gratitude, both to God and their invisible guardian, by spending it in a devout manner. As there is an indulgence attached to the feast of St. Michael, we should do well, I think, to approach the holy communion in honor of our guardian angel, on the day appointed for his commemoration."

"What do you expect your angel to do for you?" said Lady Harcourt. "Although Protestants do not reject this doctrine, since it is supported by the authority of Scripture, yet we consider it unjustifiable to address the angels as you do, in the language of prayer and supplication; because, as I have remarked on a former occasion, we admit no other mediator than Jesus Christ."

"And we," rejoined Miss Hargrave, "though admitting to its fullest extent, as your ladyship has been already

informed, the efficacy of the sole mediatorship of our blessed Redeemer, are happy, from a sense of our numberless iniquities, to avail ourselves of the intercession of the whole court of heaven, in order to secure the divine mercy. Our guardian angel is our constant companion, and the witness of all our actions, whether good or bad. His charge is to protect us from danger, to counsel us in our doubts, to shield us from the poisonous darts of our invisible enemy, and to conduct us safely to the mansions of eternal bliss."

"I suppose, then, he is not always faithful to his trust," said Frances, "or that he is less powerful than his adversary; otherwise, we should not observe so many bad people in the world, who, it appears to me, stand but little chance of going to heaven."

"You must have advanced this supposition, my love," returned Miss Hargrave, "merely for the sake of argument, for I am convinced that you cannot require any information on the point we are discussing. I will indulge your fancy, however, and reply. Man, endued with reason, and gifted with free will, is at liberty to profit by, or to reject, the grace of God, which is conferred on him at the font of baptism. From the moment in which he attains the use of reason, he is engaged in a continual warfare. His enemies are, the world, with its deceitful allurements; his unruly passions, the effects of original sin; and the devil, who, like a hungry lion, watches for a favorable opportunity to seize his prey.

"Let us, for an instant, figure to ourselves a child, in whom reason has just established its empire, assailed by his first temptation to commit mortal sin. In his yet uncontaminated soul, a consciousness of right and wrong is deeply implanted; he hesitates—his volition is unconstrained. On the one hand, he is urged by the devil, self-love, and his predominating passion, to yield. On the other, divine grace, the fear of punishment, and his anxious guardian, incite him to resist the attack. Important, eventful moment, on which, perhaps, an eternity of bliss or of misery depends! If he successfully withstand the temptation, and dedicate the first impulse of his will to his Creator, his soul will be strengthened with new grace, the power of his enemies will be weakened by this defeat, and his passions will, in future, be more easily controlled. A child that has obtained this early triumph is a spectacle of admiration to the whole court of heaven; and should he make

his first communion, while he yet retains his primitive innocence, there is every reason to hope, that his life will be virtuous, and his end happy. If we now turn to the other side, and contemplate the melancholy effects of yielding to the first temptation, we shall discover the cause, why virtue is so feeble, and vice predominant.

“Represent to your mind a youth assailed, as the former, by a strong inclination to transgress a known command; for even the law of nature teaches us to distinguish right from wrong. He, too, hesitates; but stifling the internal voice which warns him of his duty, he unhappily submits, and, for a momentary gratification, incurs a load of guilt. Lamentable fall! The spotless robe of innocence, with which he was invested at his baptism, instantly disappears, his enemies triumph, and his weeping angel stands aghast at the dreadful change. That soul, heretofore so beautiful, the admiration of celestial spirits, the temple of the Most High, is converted at once into an object inconceivably hideous and loathsome, the dwelling-place of Satan, and the defenceless victim of his future snares. For that noble faculty, the will, having now, by its first act, formally violated the law of its Creator, and subjected itself to the dominion of a powerful adversary, will find a greater difficulty, afterwards, in turning to God, and walking in the way of his holy commandments. Robbed of her energies by mortal sin, the soul is left so weak and languid, that she is scarcely able to struggle with her passions, and subject them to the empire of reason. In this degraded situation, when the gates of heaven are closed against, and hell is opened to receive, this unfortunate child of Adam, his guardian angel is still his friend; he bewails his fall, but he does not abandon his charge. He assiduously watches at a distance, turns aside, as much as possible, every impending danger, and, by his supplication, stays, if I may so express myself, the divine arm, lest infinite justice should, by a premature death, plunge the offender into an abyss of woe. If this most dreadful of all evils be mercifully averted, his condition still renders the aid of a vigilant and anxious guardian most desirable. That affectionate friend exerts all his influence, and the power he receives from God, to rescue the fallen soul from the hands of its enemies. He invites, he urges the sinner, to break his chains, to emancipate himself from the heavy yoke of the devil, now his master, and to enter again into the flowery paths of

virtue. But alas ! the operation is laborious ; his passions have gained the ascendancy over his mind ; restraint is irksome ; the loss of innocence has deprived virtue of its charm, and the early victim of a degenerate will experiences, within his own heart, continual obstacles to his recovery of the divine favor. He neglects prayer, is indifferent to the fulfilment of religious duties, and prepares with reluctance for the sacraments. Hence, my dear Frances, proceeds that inclination to evil, so strikingly apparent in youth, and that lamentable sloth and tepidity in the service of God, which is too often our companion even to the grave. It is to the bad use we make of our will, and to the frequency of mortal sin, that we must attribute the vices which you remark in the world, and not to the want of power or vigilance, on the part of our angel-guardians."

"Dear madam," said Frances, "your picture has brought to my memory all the faults of my younger days, and my conscience reproaches me with having been the exact character which you have delineated."

"Your case, my love, I am sorry to observe, is that of thousands. Happy would it be if all endeavored, like you, to repair the faults of childhood, by timely reformation. Acknowledge, then, with gratitude, the vigilance of your good angel, and do not fail to return him thanks for the share he may have had in your conversion. The most effectual way to honor him, is to persevere in a virtuous course of life, because, whatever renders you displeasing to God, is hateful to this angelic spirit. This subject has caused a long digression ; but I hope it will not prove entirely without advantage.

"The next festival is Saints Simon and Jude."—"Oh, they are apostles," exclaimed Frances ; "a short account of them will suffice."

"You are for dismissing the apostles very unceremoniously, my dear sister," said Maria ; "but lest I should fatigue you, I will be careful not to dwell long on their history. Indeed, but few particulars have reached us of the lives of several of the apostles, and it is so with regard to the two of whom we are speaking.

"St. Jude was related to our blessed Saviour, according to the flesh, being the son of Alpheus, and Mary of Cleophas ; with respect to St. Simon, his companion and fellow-laborer, some writers are in doubt, whether he was

his brother, or merely of the same name. They were both faithful to the call of divine grace, were made priests and bishops with the other apostles, and, like them, died in defence of the Catholic faith. The chief theatre of their exertions was Egypt and Mesopotamia. They wrought splendid miracles, and converted innumerable souls. St. Jude wrote the epistle which bears his name."

Miss Hargrave, perceiving that Maria did not wish to extend her remarks, lest they should be disagreeable to her sister, thus took up the conversation: "We ought to celebrate the festivals of the apostles with particular devotion, and pour forth the grateful effusions of our hearts to God, for raising to so high a degree of sanctity, men who were regarded by the world as of no account, having neither high birth nor human learning to recommend them to notice. Though lowly, humble and illiterate, they were chosen by the Almighty to be the pillars of his church, the princes of his people. The dignity to which they were exalted, entitles them to our respect, and the holiness of their lives, to our veneration. Their zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, should animate us to exertion; and though all are not required to preach the gospel, or convert the unbeliever, none are exempt from the duty of leading virtuous lives, and tacitly instructing their neighbor by good example."—"I should not suppose," interrupted Frances, "that any one is converted merely by the example of another."

"You are deceived, my love," continued Miss Hargrave, "assisted by divine grace, it often preaches more eloquently than words, and has a more powerful effect than you seem to imagine. If bad example spreads its poison far and wide; if, like a resistless vortex, it draws multitudes into the gulf of vice and immorality;—why shall no benefit result from its contrary virtue, nor any persons be induced by good example to embrace a regular and Christian life? The great bulk of mankind are materially influenced by the conduct of their superiors. Thousands are of so flexible a character, as to be easily led by those with whom they associate; and if the latter be moral and religious, their weak imitators will become so too. Be assured, my dear Frances, that when persons of rank lead exemplary lives: when they allow their light to shine before men; when they have courage to brave the censure of worldlings, and are not ashamed to profess themselves Christians and candidates



for heaven;—they never fail to give much edification to all who come within their sphere. The regularity of their manners is a silent reproof to such as are too weak to imitate them, and they are respected even by those who affect to hold religion in contempt.”

“Have you concluded your observations, dear madam?” said Frances, when her governess ceased to speak. “I have caused many digressions from the original subject, and therefore must not complain. May we now proceed? There are only three other festivals to notice; so, dear Maria, give us *multum in parvo*, for you are aware of the cause of my impatience.”

Maria requested Miss Mordaunt to take her turn, and oblige them with a short account of the festival of All Saints.

“This feast,” said Jane, “which is a holiday of obligation, is observed on the first of November. It was instituted by the church with a view to honor, in one solemnity, that innumerable multitude of holy persons, of all ages and nations, who have enriched her by their merits, and adorned her annals by the extraordinary sanctity of their lives. Besides commemorating those saints for whom no particular day can be set apart, the church, anxious for the eternal welfare of all her children, avails herself of this favorable opportunity, and exerts her zeal to induce them to labor assiduously in the important affair of their salvation. For the accomplishment of this object, she holds up to them the example, and points to the reward, of these faithful servants and special friends of God. In human concerns there are often many competitors for a prize, which one alone can obtain; but in the contest for heaven, a crown of victory is bestowed on all who, having entered the lists, persevere to the end; and whether they arrive first at the goal, or, by more tardy steps, reach it at a later period, none will fail to receive an abundant and eternal recompense.”

“The practical catechism,” said the governess, addressing Miss Alton, “gives some short but excellent instructions on the subject of this festival; can you repeat them?”—“I can relate the substance of them,” answered Maria. “The benefits we may derive from a religious observance of this annual solemnity are, that if, on our part, we are not wanting in our duty, we shall obtain new graces by multiplying our intercessors, and be encouraged by the bright example before us, to make more strenuous efforts for the

acquisition of those virtues, which will qualify us to enjoy their happy society. We should endeavor to awaken in our hearts an earnest desire to imitate the saints, by reflecting, that they had the same difficulties to overcome, the same passions to struggle with, the same temptations to resist; and that there is not wanting, in our regard, the same powerful assistance from above, that enabled them to secure the crown of glory for which they fought with so much valor."

"Most of your saints," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "lived in convents or deserts, or had otherwise retired from the world; so that they were but little exposed to temptation."—"Many of them, certainly, abandoned the world," replied Miss Alton; "but multitudes, also, who continued in it, attained to a high degree of sanctity. We have innumerable examples of persons of all professions, even from the prince to the day-laborer; mechanics of various trades, soldiers, servants and nobles—who passed their lives in the world, and yet secured their salvation by resisting the contagion of bad example, mortifying their passions, and walking steadfastly in the path of the divine commands."

"The life of the saints," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "or even of those whom you call devout persons, must, I think, be excessively irksome. Their niceness, with regard to things which are by numbers considered trifles, and their constant apprehension, lest they should transgress in some matter of little importance, must render their lives a perfect slavery."

"Far, very far from it, my dear madam," said Miss Hargrave. "Our blessed Lord has assured us, that 'his yoke is easy and his burden light;' and I am fully persuaded, that those who engage heartily in his service ever find it so. If man were not a free agent, he could neither merit reward nor deserve punishment; but being the entire master of his will, no one is less a slave than he who embraces a devout life. The restraints imposed by virtue on the passions, are painful only to the worldling, or the tepid Christian. To the faithful servant of Jesus Christ, who fears nothing so much as to offend his heavenly Master, every privation is welcome, every sacrifice that preserves him from sin is easy and sweet."

"When I read the lives of the saints," said Maria, "and contemplate their heroic virtues, my numberless

defects seem represented to me as in a mirror, and I despair of ever resembling them in the slightest degree.”—“Oh, Maria, that is ridiculous!” exclaimed Frances; “I wish I was as good as you are! Almighty God, you know, does not require all to be saints, or there would be no society.”

“I think with you, Frances,” said Lady Harcourt, “that if persons, who live in the world, pay due respect to the outward forms of religion, and are otherwise morally virtuous, it is sufficient, and as much as can be expected—” —“This is the usual language of the world,” interrupted Miss Hargrave; “its votaries always hold the practices of piety in contempt. The observation that escaped you just now, my dear Frances, was one of those which you still occasionally utter without sufficient reflection. That all are not required to become anchorets, and bury themselves in solitude, or to withdraw from the world into a cloister, I willingly admit; but that it is the bounden duty of every Christian to lead a holy life, is equally unquestionable.”

“But,” observed Frances, “every one not under the guilt of mortal sin, may be considered in the way of salvation, and therefore I conclude is in some measure a saint.” —“In the way of salvation, most assuredly,” answered Miss Hargrave.

“Well, then,” rejoined Frances, smiling, “I will endeavor to belong to this latter class, that I may not, in the end, lose heaven.”—“To avoid sin merely from the fear of hell, is, as I have remarked to you before, so despicable and self-interested, as to render a soul that acts from no better impulse, unworthy of the bliss it presumes to hope for. Persevere, however, in your resolution not on any account to commit mortal sin; dread it as your greatest enemy; fly the occasions of it; but do this, I beseech you, from a motive worthy of a child of God, worthy of one who has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. When this resolution is firmly established on the basis of divine charity, deliberate venial faults will soon become odious, and be shunned with equal care.”

“But a person in this condition is far from having acquired the sanctity of the saints,” interrupted Miss Alton. —“Very far, I allow; but you must not, on that account, be discouraged; for a soul to whom all deliberate sin is hateful, though she may still be subject to many imperfections, is, nevertheless, highly pleasing to Him who loves us

with an unbounded tenderness. In a soul thus disposed, the Holy Spirit takes great complacency and delights to dwell. He cherishes her with his grace, and, while she continues to coöperate with it, defends her, with a strong arm, from the power of her enemies. The actions which dazzle most in the lives of the saints, such as their miracles, their ecstasies, and their peculiar austerities, are not those to which we ought to aspire; since they are neither indubitable proofs of a holy life, nor requisite to it. It is their poverty of spirit, their charity, their humility, and their interior mortification of the senses, that we are called upon to imitate; and, according to our proficiency in these respects, shall we have merit in the sight of God.”—“But we can never be certain that we are in favor with Almighty God,” said Maria, “and, therefore, must always continue in a state of anxiety.”

“If,” returned Miss Hargrave, “St. Paul has said, ‘I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet I am not hereby justified,’ we can never presume to think ourselves secure. Still we must not give way to anxiety on that head, but throw ourselves, with great confidence, into the arms of our heavenly Father, who most earnestly wills our salvation. Indeed, so disposed are we to pride and self-complacency, that it is an act of mercy on the part of God, to keep us in this uncertain condition; lest if we knew that we had found favor in his sight, we should be vain enough to attribute it to our own merit, rather than to the effect of divine grace, and thus, like Lucifer, fall by our pride.”

“Now what particular virtue,” inquired Jane, “would you recommend to us to cultivate first? I think I have read, that it is advisable to take one at a time; but I never can determine which to select, as being of the most general utility.”—“The ‘Spiritual Combat,’ a very valuable little book, will supply you with far more excellent rules on this subject than I can pretend to lay down. You will there learn, that the virtue which you should labor seriously to acquire, is that which is most opposed to your predominant passion. If, however, I may venture to point out one in preference to another,” continued Miss Hargrave, after a moment’s pause, “I will say, implore the grace of conformity to the will of God.”—“Oh,” exclaimed Frances, with a significant shrug of the shoulders, “I thought it would have been humility! But this is quite as repugnant to poor human nature. I suspect you have fixed on it, because

you are aware that I am still too much attached to self-will.”—“Not you alone, my dear child,” returned Miss Hargrave; “we are all of us too fond of our own will; and I, therefore, recommend this virtue, because the greatest and most acceptable proof of love that we can give to the Almighty, is cheerfully to sacrifice that will to his. If, then, you pray with fervor and perseverance, that the most adorable will of God may be ever perfectly accomplished in you and by you, at all times, and under all circumstances, this choicest of all blessings will assuredly be bestowed on you, as well as every other virtue necessary for salvation. To enumerate all the advantages we should derive from this supereminent grace, would detain us too long. It may be sufficient to observe, that were you to devote your whole attention to this desirable object, you would ultimately attain to a high degree of sanctity; though you might never work miracles, be favored with visions, or perform any wonderful austerities. The festival of All Saints has occupied so much time, that I fear the dinner-bell will announce five o’clock before you have completed your undertaking.”

“I hope not,” said Frances; “we need only remark, on the subject of All Souls, that it is a day of devotion, observed on the second of November, with a view to commemorate, and assist by our prayers, the souls of the faithful departed. The meaning of purgatory, and the object of praying for the dead, were fully explained to her ladyship a few evenings ago. The thirtieth of November is St. Andrew. This is likewise a day of devotion, in honor of the apostle of that name, who suffered martyrdom, by being fastened to a cross. When he beheld the cross, he was greatly affected, and is said to have exclaimed, ‘O beloved cross! which, for this long time, I have most earnestly desired, receive the disciple of him who died upon thee.’ In the year 357, his body was removed from Patras in Achaia, where he suffered, to Constantinople; it has since been transferred to Amalfi, in the kingdom of Naples.”

“You have omitted to notice the festival observed on the twenty-first of November, called the Presentation of the blessed Virgin,” said Miss Alton, when her sister had finished her brief account; “it must not, however, be passed over in silence. The intention of the church, in the institution of this feast, was, to praise and thank God for the graces with which he so amply endowed the blessed Virgin,

who was the first of her sex that made profession of perpetual chastity. Persons who have already devoted themselves to God should, on this day, renew their vows; and they whose condition in life is not yet determined, are exhorted to beg, by the intercession of this holy Virgin, that the Almighty would be pleased to direct them to that state in which he designs they shall work out their salvation."

The entrance of Sir James precluded any further remarks; and Lady Harcourt expressed herself much indebted to her young friends for the trouble they had taken to satisfy her curiosity.

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

BEFORE Lady Harcourt quitted the Park, she sought an opportunity of speaking to Sir James Alton on a subject which had long occupied her mind, and most deeply interested her feelings. Her eldest and favorite child, the honorable Philip Harcourt, was expected in a few months to revisit the paternal mansion, whence he had been absent on his travels about three years; and she looked forward to his return with those delightful sensations which it was natural that a fond mother should experience for an only son.

Mr. Harcourt was in his twenty-fourth year, elegant in manners, accomplished in mind, handsome in person, and irreproachable in his moral conduct. It was the wish of his parents that he should marry early, and they often deliberated where, in the numerous circle of their friends, it would be most eligible to form a connection. It was not altogether their design to control his choice, but they were anxious to lead it into what they considered a proper channel. Both Lord and Lady Harcourt turned their views on the Misses Alton. Such an alliance would, in point of rank and fortune, be unexceptionable; but then religion presented a difficulty. His lordship was assured Sir James would never consent that the children of such marriage, or even the sons only, should be educated in the Protestant faith; and the idea of a Catholic heir, little as he was prejudiced on religious subjects, could not for a moment be tolerated. He, therefore, dismissed the thought, and requested his lady not to give the least hint to Sir James or Lady Alton, that an alliance with the family had ever been contemplated.

Notwithstanding this prohibition, Lady Harcourt still felt disposed to hear the opinion of Sir James. She was aware that his sentiments with regard to her son were favorable; and she conceived that, as the advantages would certainly be on the side of his daughter, some arrangement might possibly be effected. She herself preferred the lively and engaging Frances; but it appeared to her, on reflection, that the highly-cultivated mind, the dignified manners, and the gentle temper of Miss Alton, would better suit the taste of her son, and be more congenial to his disposition. This was the motive that urged her to inquire into the principles of the Catholic religion, and rendered her anxious to learn its doctrines from the young ladies themselves. But she found them far better informed on the subject than she expected, and lost all hope that, in the event of a marriage, she would ever succeed in making either of them a convert. Still she was pleased to discover, that the Catholic faith was not in reality what its enemies represented; and she had, while at Alton, daily evidence of the exalted virtue which it is capable of producing in its followers.

Though more and more convinced of her little prospect of success, yet, as a mark of her friendship for the baronet and his amiable family, she resolved to open her mind, and ascertain his sentiments. She availed herself, therefore, of an opportunity that seemed favorable to her purpose, on the eve of her quitting the Park; and, after describing, at some length, the many virtues and brilliant prospects of her son, expressed a wish that Sir James would condescend to bestow on him the hand of his eldest daughter, should the young people, on being introduced, prove agreeable to each other.

Sir James was startled and alarmed at the proposal. The idea of such a connection had never entered his thoughts, as Mr. Harcourt was not a Catholic. With the warmest declarations of friendship, he thanked her ladyship for the intended honor, assuring her, that no alliance would have been more gratifying to him, had each party professed the same religious creed; but difference of opinion on a subject so important to the happiness of both must, he added, constitute an insurmountable bar to the union. Her ladyship acknowledged that Lord Harcourt had suggested a similar difficulty; and after listening to some judicious remarks made by Sir James on the inconveniences

which too frequently arise from such marriages, said, "I conceive that when both parties are amiable, as in the present instance, there can be very little danger on this head, because they will mutually strive to accommodate each other."

"Alas! madam," replied Sir James, "a fatal poison lurks beneath that willingness to please, when religion is the object. The principles of the one or the other party, it may be of both, are relaxed, and they too often become weak and tepid Christians."—"You view this matter in too serious a light, Sir James," observed Lady Harcourt, "and anticipate evils that rarely occur."

"Pardon me, madam," interrupted Sir James, "if I venture to assert, that the far greater number of such connections are productive of a train of evils, of which none but those who have experienced them, or who have attentively considered the results, can form any adequate idea. I speak on this subject, you are aware, with the feelings of a Catholic, and maintain that, when there is a variance in religious opinions, there is seldom that entire sympathy of mind which is necessary to constitute a happy marriage. One party is bound by obligations which the other thinks of little or no importance; the same sacraments do not unite, the same observances do not equally interest them. Instead of walking hand-in-hand to heaven, mutually supporting each other, they take opposite paths;—different creeds excite different interests; and religion, which ought to draw more closely the bands which connect them, becomes, in their regard, a source of uneasiness, if not of discord."

"But your church allows of these marriages," said Lady Harcourt; "why are you so severe against them?"—"The church, indeed, tolerates them," answered Sir James; "but it is with regret. A reluctant consent is, as it were, extorted from her; and in yielding to the pressing solicitations of her imprudent children, she trembles lest it should be at the cost of their eternal well-being. It is, however, the issue of such marriages that form the chief obstacle to domestic peace, and that become the innocent cause of so much unhappiness. When the children are of an age to be susceptible of religious impressions, one parent wishes to instil principles which the other opposes; and this disunion in the education of their offspring is a continual subject of anxiety, and frequently of dispute."



"I conceive," said Lady Harcourt, "if an agreement is made, that the daughters shall be brought up in the faith of the mother, and the sons in that of the father, there is no just ground of complaint, and each party should be satisfied."

"This agreement, my dear madam," answered Sir James, "may content Protestants; but the Catholic church neither does nor can concede to it. She recognizes no right in a Catholic father or mother to consent, that a part of the offspring be educated in principles which they acknowledge to be erroneous: and if they venture so to do, it is at the hazard of their own and their children's salvation."

"It is far from the desire of the church of England, that such marriages should be contracted," said Lady Harcourt, "for it often happens, that she loses thereby some of her children, from the Protestant party becoming Catholic."

"In that case, the advantage is certainly on our side," resumed Sir James; "but I question whether we are eventually gainers; as various, I could almost say numberless, instances might be adduced, in which whole families, the offspring of a weak Catholic mother, or more reprehensible father, have been educated in Protestant or sectarian principles; or, perhaps, which is still worse, they have been left without any religious instruction at all, because neither parent would enforce tenets which were not agreeable to the creed or the practices of the other. It is with reason, therefore, that the Catholic church discourages such unions, since they are too often the fruitful source of dissention in families, and the cause of the perversion of numbers from the one only true faith."

"Then your loss is our gain," interrupted Lady Harcourt, smiling.—"Not always," returned Sir James; "for, among those who are brought up as I have described, many adhere to no church, and are little better than moral heathens."

Lady Harcourt, discovering that she was not likely to succeed in her object, had no wish to prolong the conversation. She therefore merely requested Sir James never to intimate to her lord, that she had ventured to tread on forbidden ground, as—

Lady Alton now joining them, nothing more was said, and the appearance of a servant, soon afterwards, with a packet of letters for Lady Harcourt, furnished her with an excuse to withdraw, of which she availed herself the more

gladly, as her spirits were depressed and agitated by her conference with the baronet.

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

AT the hour when the family usually assembled to drink tea, Lady Harcourt returned to the drawing-room, and finding that no visitors had enlarged the circle, displayed her packet of letters. Traces of tears were still visible on her countenance, and various inquiries were made respecting the health and prosperity of each individual that was dear to her. She quickly relieved their affectionate solicitude, by informing them, that all were well. "My dear son," she continued, "has, you know, been dangerously ill; but my tears have flowed from a sentiment of gratitude to God for his recovery, rather than from any present uneasiness, as he assures me, that he is completely convalescent. After tea, you shall hear what he says of himself. I must now apprise you, that my two daughters will be married in the beginning of May, one to Sir John Sinclair, the other to the——"

"Both!" exclaimed Frances, interrupting the unfinished sentence; "why, Amelia is not quite so old as I am! surely she is too young."—"You are right, my love, she is too young; but having unfortunately been introduced at the early age of sixteen, and having passed almost two years amid the tumult of fashionable life, she thinks it is time to be married, and apprehends that the present opportunity of aggrandizement might not recur. The Marquis of Eastland has laid his coronet at her feet, and it is an offer not to be rejected hastily."

"The Marquis of Eastland!" said Sir James, in a tone of surprise; "has, then, that steady and reflecting nobleman been captivated by the charms of a lady more than young enough to be his daughter? I must confess that I do not approve of those unequal matches; they are seldom happy. I conceive an accomplished woman, of mature age, would better suit his domestic habits; but beauty has great power over an unguarded heart. Your ladyship will have no reason, I think, to complain of your intended son-in-law, and I hope Miss Harcourt appreciates his merits more than his title."

"Rather severe, Sir James," said Lady Harcourt, good-

humoredly; "you seem to have no compassion for the little foibles of our sex; I wonder you could ever have ventured yourself into the land of matrimony. It was not, I presume, till after you had moulded the object of your choice to your old-fashioned taste, that you dared to put on the fetters of Hymen."

"Mine, I assure you, have been silken bands, and not fetters," returned Sir James, smiling; then, pressing the hand of his lady to his lips, he continued, "I never knew Lady Alton other than modestly reserved, pious and amiable, as she is at present. When I determined to marry, my old-fashioned notions induced me to beg of Almighty God the special favor of a virtuous wife, with whom I might live happily. The Hon. Miss Clifton, descended from a long line of virtuous ancestors, was recommended to me; she blessed me with her hand, and I considered her as the gift of Heaven. We have been married twenty years, and no shadow of discord has ever, for a moment, clouded our union. Lady Alton has kindly overlooked my faults, and in her I have never been able to discover any. Her pliant——"

"Cease, my love," interrupted her ladyship, gently putting her hand across the mouth of Sir James, while her fine eyes glistened with the tear of conjugal affection; "it is said, 'that love is blind,' and truly your partiality and forbearance have made you so. To your example, I am indebted for most of the little virtue I possess."

"I hope, if ever I marry," said Frances in her usual lively tone, "I shall get just such a husband as papa, who seems to observe no faults in any one but himself. But no," she added, "the words, 'Let women be subject in all things to their husbands,' sound so harshly in my ears, that I think I shall never have courage to promise obedience, even to the first duke in the kingdom."

"But there is always a counter-promise made by the lover, Frances," said Sir James, laughing; "he assures the fair lady, about to honor him with her hand, that she shall be the absolute mistress, not only of her own will, but of his also; that her wishes shall be equivalent to commands, and that none shall contradict her with impunity."—"Oh," exclaimed Frances, "you are joking now! Is he not, mamma?" she continued, addressing her mother; "did papa ever make you these fine promises? Yet I might almost fancy he did, and that he kept them too, for I believe he never contradicts you."

"No, my sweet girl," said Sir James, "your mother was a lady of too excellent an understanding, to be flattered by delusive protestations, seldom offered but to gratify the weak and ignorant. A young lady in love with herself, vain of her beauty and exterior accomplishments, never expects to be addressed in other language than that of adulation. Common sense is beneath her notice, or if she ever deign to listen to it, it is but to turn into ridicule the silly clown who ventures to employ it; he is declared an insufferable boor, whose conversation is fit only for the vulgar. Hence, when the irrevocable words have been pronounced, and the effervescence of love has subsided; when the adoring lover is transformed into the husband, and the captivating mistress into the wife—hence result so many bitter disappointments. The mask which had been assumed, gradually falls off, and the defects of each other become apparent. The goddess is converted into a mere woman, and the irresistible Adonis is sunk to the level of his fellow mortals. The charm once broken, it is fortunate if the parties are sufficiently complaisant to be even tolerable to each other; and without the exercise of much prudence on the side of the wife, they will be in great danger of being completely wretched."

Lady Harcourt rallied Sir James on his antediluvian ideas, as she termed them, and assured him, that he would never settle his daughters advantageously, if he persuaded them to be fastidious in the choice of a husband. "Happiness," she continued, "must be a secondary consideration. Independence, aggrandizement, title, are now the chief objects that engage the attention of parents in the establishment of their children; and a young lady, who has been fashionably brought up, thinks only of the pleasure she anticipates on becoming her own mistress, making a dash, and excelling her acquaintances in the splendor of her equipage, furniture and attire. But, to be serious: youth, you know, is full of hope, and dazzled by the brilliant, but too often deceitful, prospect which their fancy has created; they joyfully rush into a matrimonial connection, without calculating that the sun of their happiness will, at any time, be obscured by clouds. 'Let us enjoy the present day,' is the maxim of the thoughtless; 'reflection will come soon enough.'"

"Reflection comes too late," interrupted Lady Alton, "when peace and happiness are destroyed."

"True," resumed Lady Harcourt; "but if our daughters reject the experience of age, and, in opposition to the advice of parents, and others who are interested in their welfare, will rely on their own shallow judgment, and choose for themselves, they must submit to the consequences. Marriage is said to be a lottery, in which all must take their chance. There are, I should think, at least ten blanks to a prize."

"Probably a larger proportion," returned Sir James; "for, could we dive into the recesses of the heart, we should discover that too many, whose countenances indicate satisfaction and cheerfulness, are in reality the sport of ill humor, and a prey to discontent. I cannot, however, admit with your ladyship, that matrimony, which was raised by our divine Lord to the dignity of a sacrament, and honored with his presence, ought to be regarded as a mere lottery—a fortuitous connection of uncongenial minds fated, as it were, to wed each other. No! the tender providence of God watches over his creatures with too much solicitude, thus to abandon them to the caprice of chance. But if young persons rashly engage in that holy state, without having previously consulted God by prayer, in order to learn his will—if they are influenced by passion, sensuality and worldly interest, rather than by the motives which prudence, reason and religion suggest, it is no wonder that unhappy couples are so numerous in all the grades of society. The end of marriage, as a natural contract, was merely to furnish the world with inhabitants; but, as a sacrament, its object is to fill the church, and complete the number of the elect in heaven."

"Our church," interrupted Lady Harcourt, "does not admit matrimony into the number of her sacraments; but looks upon it, nevertheless, as a solemn religious observance, necessary to render the contract holy in the sight of God, and honorable before men. In a spiritual point of view, I believe very little preparation is ever made for it."

"The cause is evident, then," resumed Sir James, "why so many marriages are unhappy—Christ is not invited to the wedding. The Catholic church esteems matrimony a sacrament of great importance, both to religion and to civil society, and therefore exhorts her children to approach to it with a holy intention, devout preparation, and purity of conscience. in order that they may draw down the blessing of God on their union, and obtain grace to acquit

themselves properly of its various duties ; for, on the fulfilment of these, their happiness in this life, and their eternal salvation in the next, materially depend."

"Few young persons of either sex," observed Lady Harcourt, "make much inquiry, I believe, relative to the duties of the state they are about to embrace : its pleasures occupy the greater portion of their thoughts."

"Generally speaking," said Lady Alton, "your remark it but too just ; yet no condition has greater need of supernatural aid, to support its anxieties and trials ; for, however well-assorted the match, however happy the parties may be in themselves, there always is a counterpoise, and numberless thorns are concealed amidst the roses."

"Do the duties to which you allude relate to the wife only ?" asked Frances.—"By no means," answered her ladyship ; "the greater number are reciprocal. Amongst these, to love each other in God, and for God, with a holy and chaste affection, is a mutual obligation of great importance, and includes many others conducive to happiness. Their love should be complaisant and respectful, assiduously avoiding whatever may give offence, and kindly anticipating each other in things lawful and agreeable ; patiently bearing with the failings, humors and infirmities they may discover, whether of body or mind. No uncivil language, harsh words, or imperious commands, should ever be indulged by either party, lest they destroy that harmony and good-will which ought to subsist, without interruption, between married persons. And, lastly, a firm resolution should be made never to listen to evil reports, or to afford the slightest grounds for jealousy or suspicion."

"Were these mutual duties carefully fulfilled," said the governess, "the married state would be much happier than it is generally found to be. Small faults will, no doubt, exist on both sides, which, if they were not noticed at the time, would produce no evil consequences ; but, reprehended peevishly, and with ill-timed harshness, they are too often the cause of serious quarrels."

"The faults, I apprehend, are more frequently on the part of the husband," said Frances.—"I cannot agree with you in that opinion," returned Sir James, smiling ; "though truth compels me to acknowledge, that the number of those who slight the admonition of St. Paul, charging husbands to love their wives as Christ loves his church, is by no means inconsiderable. Do not, however, indulge the

erroneous idea, Frances, that your sex is always undeserving of blame, nor suppose that the evils which you endure are never the result of your own folly. Many a young woman, before marriage, acts a tyrant's part over the man whose addresses she receives : he is the slave of her capricious humor, the victim of her coquetry and affected disdain. This conduct, or rather misconduct, for so it may justly be termed, is by no means amiable. I may add, that it is excessively impolitic, being oftentimes the cause of severe recrimination, when the lover is changed into the husband. The law of obedience, which seems so repugnant to you, Frances, is the consequence and the punishment of the transgression of Eve, our common mother. It is, however, at the same time, replete with wisdom and love, contributing much to individual happiness and public tranquillity. If two persons in any community, whether large or small, contend with violence for superior sway, a breach of good order is always the result : so would it be with husband and wife, had not an all-wise Providence ordained, that the latter should be subject to the former, as to the Lord, because the man is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of the church. Authority, therefore, on one side, and submission on the other, are, when not at variance with the laws of God, a source of peace and comfort to both."

"Then a wife," said Frances, "is destined to be a complete slave to her husband."—"Not in the least, my love," resumed Sir James. "The obedience which so much startles you, should not be abject, like the forced obsequiousness of a slave ; but that holy and Christian obedience, which has the divine command for its motive, God for its object—an obedience, which is the offspring of respect and love, rather than the servile child of fear. If a young lady would study well the merits of this virtue, and be careful to practise it, she would seldom fail, eventually, to become the master."

"How so, papa," asked Maria.—"Because, by a willing and cheerful compliance with the will of her husband, in all things where God is not offended ; by patience when he is troublesome, by meekness when he is violent ; readily conforming her taste to his, and laboring to remove those imperfections in her own character which she observes are most displeasing to him, she will permanently secure the heart her beauty or her fortune captivated, and at

length acquire so great an ascendancy, as to triumph most, when most she seems to yield. The grace of the sacrament will enable her to accomplish this, if she approach to it with the necessary dispositions ; and the following beautiful eulogium, which we read in the Holy Scripture, will, in that case, be applicable to her.

“ ‘A virtuous woman,’ says the wise man, ‘rejoiceth her husband, and shall fulfil the years of his life in peace. A good wife is a good portion : she shall be given in the portion of them that fear God, to a man for his good deeds. House and riches are given by parents ; but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord. Happy is the husband of a good wife ; for the number of his years is double. The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils. She hath opened her hand to the needy, and stretched out her hands to the poor. Strength and beauty are her clothing, and she shall laugh at the latter day. She hath opened her mouth to wisdom, and the law of clemency is on her tongue. She hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten the bread of idleness. Her children rose up and called her blessed ; her husband, and he praised her. Favor is deceitful ; beauty is vain : the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.’ ”

“ ‘These honorable testimonials, my dear children, in favor of a virtuous wife,’ continued Sir James, “should animate young ladies, who are about to enter into the holy state of matrimony, to qualify themselves for the due performance of their various obligations, since, if they be religiously fulfilled, they are so meritorious in the sight of God.”

“ ‘A little anecdote,’ said Lady Alton, “has occurred to my mind, which will exemplify what has just been advanced on this subject.

“ ‘Mr. Egerton, a gentleman of fortune, residing on his estate in the country, married a young lady of suitable condition. They had not, however, been long united before Mrs. Egerton discovered faults in the husband, which, in the lover, she had never perceived. On a nearer view, she found him violent in his temper, austere in his manners, and most arbitrary in his commands. He was also fond of pleasure, slightly addicted to gambling, and would willingly have spent the greater part of the year in the dissipating amusements of the metropolis. To coun-



terbalance these defects, which proceeded from too much indulgence in his youth, he had a good heart, was charitable to the poor, strictly just and honorable in his principles; and though he was not practically very religious, he nevertheless respected religion, and caused its precepts to be observed in his family. To his domestics, he was a liberal master; but on condition only of the most prompt and entire obedience. He was too irritable to bear the least contradiction from an inferior; and, in his moments of passion, would frequently discharge a valuable servant for some trifling inadvertency. When his anger had subsided, he was sorry for its effects, but was too haughty to make concessions.

"United to such a man, Mrs. Egerton had necessarily much to suffer. Accustomed to no heavier yoke than that of parents who treated her with the utmost tenderness, she was at first inclined to resist his imperious commands, to uphold her opinion, and answer him with asperity. This treatment he could not submit to, and frequent little altercations were the result. But Mrs. Egerton was too well instructed in her duty, and too piously disposed, to continue this reprehensible conduct. Observing that she gained nothing by opposition, she wisely resolved to pursue a different method, and to sacrifice entirely her own will, in order to maintain peace. She communicated her sorrows to her mother; and that judicious parent, while she mingled her tears with those of her afflicted child, prudently counselled her to act up to the generous resolutions she had formed."

"What were they, mamma?" asked Frances. "Such, my love," answered Lady Alton, "as should be adopted by you, and every one else, that happens to be placed in similar circumstances. She resolved, in the first place, to subdue her own faults, and to overcome those defects which gave the greatest displeasure to her husband. Secondly, never to answer him with harshness, however provoking his language, but to assign a reason, when he was cool, for the conduct which might have elicited his anger. Thirdly, never to dispute with him, when contrariety of sentiment was likely to produce the smallest pain, but cheerfully, and without manifesting any ill humor, to give up her opinion. Fourthly, to comply at once with his requests, how much soever they might be opposed to her convenience or her wishes. And, lastly, to receive

and entertain his relations and friends, with the same complaisance and respect, as if they were her own. This prudent behavior had the effect of securing the heart of Mr. Egerton. She likewise used every possible exertion to render his home agreeable, and, as he was fond of company, took care to invite those persons from whose society she knew he would derive pleasure and innocent amusement. He was conscious of this delicate attention, and, by degrees, London, and every species of gambling, wholly lost their charms. Her domestics were well chosen, and wisely governed : they idolized their mistress, and, for her sake, were so anxious to please their master, that he used frequently to declare, that no one in the country could boast of servants so valuable as his. At length, the husband of this amiable lady discovered, that there was no other impediment to his domestic happiness, than that which originated in his own defects. He resolved, therefore, to be more watchful over his temper, to examine seriously into his conduct, and to aim at reforming it. His austere manner towards his lady and children began to relax, and his affection to display itself. Then did Mrs. Egerton feel the value of the sacrifices she had made, and consider her happiness as cheaply purchased. For many years, no house afforded pleasure to Mr. Egerton equal to that which he experienced in his own. No wife, he maintained, could bear any comparison with his ; no children were so well educated ; no household so regular and so admirably directed. He consulted his lady with regard to all his plans, and undertook nothing without her approbation. It might truly be affirmed, that 'the heart of her husband trusted in her.' Indeed, her discreet behavior had preserved him from dissipating his fortune ; while her obedience, meekness and self-command triumphed, at last, over his rugged temper."

"Mamma," exclaimed Frances, "Maria would, I am sure, make just such a wife ; but for me, I should never have patience ! I will, however, think of Mrs. Egerton by and by. I now am anxious to hear Mr. Harcourt's letter, which her ladyship is waiting to read."

Lady Harcourt begged she might not be the means of preventing further discourse on the useful subject which had just occupied their attention ; but on being answered, that a change would be agreeable to the young ladies, she read as follows.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

*Mr. Harcourt's Letter.*

"MY beloved parents may now lay aside their fears, since I am, thanks to Divine Providence, sufficiently recovered to send your ladyship the particulars you are desirous to obtain. Charmed with the beautiful scenery between the romantic village of La Chiandola, and the gloomy town of Tenda, in the bosom of the Alps, I was too much absorbed in thought, to remark the winding of the path, or to guide the movements of the animal on which I rode. I gave him the rein, and bade him gently pursue his way; but on turning an angle, some unexpected object startled him, and, being completely off my guard, I was thrown with violence against a projecting crag. The consequences were, as you perceive, less fatal than was at first apprehended; for, being stunned by the blow, some moments elapsed before I exhibited any signs of returning animation, and poor Richard, who accompanied me, concluded that I must be dead. Happily, the unintentional cause of my disaster was a young gentleman, who, with his tutor, had strolled from the neighboring town about two miles distant, to feast his eye, and exercise his pencil, on the sublime and varied objects which, at this point, suddenly burst upon the view. What the timid animal observed in the figure of Mr. Norton or his friend to alarm him, as if he had seen a spectre, I cannot conceive. It was, however, fortunate for me, that his fright was occasioned by beings of so beneficent a character. I was conveyed, with much difficulty, to the nearest habitation, a lonely cottage, about half a mile off. No doctor being at hand, Mr. Norton was informed that I might obtain assistance from a neighboring monastery, some of whose inmates possessed considerable knowledge of medicine and surgery. Thither he proceeded in haste, and returned in the company of two venerable-looking men, who had provided themselves with every article which they judged might, under the circumstances, be useful. They discovered, on examination, a deep cut in my head and a broken arm. After dressing my wounds, with the utmost tenderness and care, they recommended that I should be kept perfectly quiet, and promised to call again on the following morning. No

arguments on the part of his tutor, or my servant, could prevail on the young stranger to quit me during the remainder of that day, or the succeeding night. He took upon himself the office of nurse, and administered the remedies prescribed, with so much exactitude, that, from the critical situation in which I was placed, I must, under God, be indebted to him for my life. He was on the road to Florence, but delayed his journey a month on my account, passing most of his time in my room, and beguiling, by his agreeable conversation, the tedious hours of my long confinement. Were I anxious to communicate all that my heart suggests in praise of my new friend, the limits of my paper would not suffice to do him justice. A faint outline of his character, in few words, is all that I shall attempt.

“Cheerful without levity, benevolent and pious without ostentation, polished in his address, and engaging in his whole demeanor, he seems to be distinguished by all the qualities that are necessary to render the character of a gentleman and a Christian perfect. You will join in my regret when I apprise you that he is a Catholic ; not that I esteem him the less on that account, as he does honor to his creed, and makes virtue and religion appear in their most amiable colors. When, by attacking his opinions, I oblige him to vindicate those observances of his church which we condemn or ridicule, he does so with all the energy of a man persuaded of the truth of what he asserts, but yet with so much politeness and moderation, that it is impossible to feel offended. Mr. Norton is the youngest child of an English baronet ; but he has been brought up and educated by an uncle, who looks upon him as his son, and proclaimed him his heir. Accompanied by the respectable ecclesiastic who travels with him under the denomination of tutor, this dear friend has at length quitted me, and his departure has left a void in my heart which nothing at present can fill up.

“I leave this in the beginning of the week ; but shall always remember with gratitude the kindness I have received from the benevolent monks and hospitable peasants of this sequestered dale. The good Jaqueline and her industrious husband look forward to my departure with sincere regret, although they have been much incommoded by my constrained residence ; for their house is small, and their family numerous. In the midst of privations, these

poor people are cheerful and happy ; contented with little, they never soar above the condition in which Providence has placed them. Their wants are easily satisfied ; and my unbounded generosity, as they term it, has made them comparatively rich.

“To induce the venerable inhabitants of the cloister to accept any remuneration was a most difficult task ; and it was only on the plea of repairing certain injuries which their monastery had sustained from the hand of time, that I at length succeeded in discharging, in some degree, the debt which I owe them for their charitable and unremitted attentions. As soon as they were prevailed on to receive this favor, I engaged workmen to execute all that was necessary, or at least as much as they would permit ; and when I went yesterday, with Mr. Norton, to examine the work, and deposit with the good fathers the amount of the estimated expense, I was overwhelmed with effusions of gratitude, and the choicest blessings of Heaven were called down upon my head. Fortunate accident ! that has procured me the knowledge of so much worth, and the prayers of men who must, without doubt, be favorites of the Most High !—an accident which, at the trifling cost of a little bodily suffering, has enabled me to render an essential service to beings of so exalted a character. In a few short years, the rude blasts of winter would have reduced their beloved solitude to a heap of ruins. Henceforth, while I live, they shall never want a friend : no variance in religious dogmas shall prevent me from paying a debt of gratitude so richly deserved.”

“I hope, papa,” interrupted Frances, who perceived that the letter was almost finished, “you will take the same road that Mr. Harcourt did ; I should like to see the good monks.”—“It would also afford me pleasure,” said Sir James ; “and therefore I think I may promise you that satisfaction.”—“We will then visit the good-natured Jacqueline,” observed Maria.—“And take her and her children some presents from me,” added Lady Harcourt, “with many thanks for their hospitality to my dear son. I trust I shall have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Norton on his return, and of making him my personal acknowledgments : I shall be proud to add him to the number of my friends, and introduce him here,” she continued, looking significantly at Sir James, and then glancing an eye on his daughters ; “but perhaps you know him already.”

"I have the honor of being acquainted with his father, and more intimately, with his uncle," replied Sir James; "but Edward Norton I have not seen for some years. I believe, however, that in the delineation of his character, Mr. Harcourt has not exaggerated, for report speaks most favorably of him."

"Then my son is fortunate in having attached himself to a person so worthy of his regard."

It was now ten o'clock; and the young ladies, with their accustomed regularity, saluted their parents, and retired, after they had taken an affectionate leave of Lady Harcourt, who was to quit the Park at an early hour the next morning. Her ladyship then requested of Sir James a few more particulars concerning Mr. Norton, and expressed a hope that, at no very distant period, she might have the pleasure of congratulating her dear friends on having him for a son-in-law.

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## CHAPTER L.

THE honorable Mr. Rainsford, a gentleman of distinguished family and large fortune, the school-fellow and bosom friend of Sir James, having become a widower, declined a second marriage. On the death of his only sister, he attached himself particularly to her youngest child, Edward Rainsford Norton, his godson, and resolved on making him his heir. The engaging Edward, when he lost his mother, was scarcely six years old; but Mr. Rainsford, wishing to bring up the child as his own, urged Sir Gregory Norton to relinquish it to his care, promising to supply the place of both father and mother. After many entreaties on the part of the uncle, Sir Gregory consented; and young Edward was established at Rainsford House. A youth of good morals and decent parentage was appointed, at the same time, to wait on him, as a kind of play-fellow and servant, under the superintendence of a learned and pious tutor.

Sir Gregory making no objection, the name of Norton was almost wholly laid aside, and that of Rainsford, which he had received in baptism, was commonly used as his surname. Mr. Rainsford watched over his adopted son with the affection and solicitude of the most tender parent. He discovered that he was a child of great promise—affec-

tionate, docile, candid and good-tempered. Business of importance having compelled the tutor to resign his charge, when Edward had completed his fourteenth year, the latter was sent to college; and his uncle had the happiness to find, that his conduct there did not disappoint his hopes. The virtues of young Rainsford gained strength with his years, and his progress in the various branches of learning evinced his talents, and the industry with which he cultivated them.

After a few years had thus been devoted to the pursuit of useful knowledge, he returned to the roof of his uncle, and was received with open arms. Although, on quitting college, he was master of his own time, he made it a rule never to be idle: he rose early, and his active mind was constantly suggesting some new expedient to furnish occupation. He was fond of horticulture, and botany had long been a favorite pursuit: these, with music and drawing, were a source of recreative employment for his leisure hours, and a relief from abstruse study. His pious turn of mind induced him to lay down a few rules for the government of his conduct in matters of religion, the observance of which was perfectly consistent with the rank he held in society. These were, never to omit the duty of morning and evening prayer—to hear mass every day—to approach the sacraments once a month—to fulfil with exactitude the precepts of fasting and abstinence, how much soever he might be laughed at or ridiculed by others—and, in a word, to avoid with the utmost care every flagrant violation of the divine commands.

At the age of twenty, accompanied by his former tutor, he quitted his uncle, to visit the chief capitals of Europe. His tour was not one of dissipation or mere idle curiosity, but was rendered subservient to the improvement of his mind. He studied the language, inquired into the laws, made himself acquainted with the customs and usages, of the various nations through which he passed; and noted down with accuracy whatever was deserving of particular attention. In this manner three years had been profitably employed, when, in one of his excursions from Tenda, amid the majestic Alps, where he was spending a week, to take views of the enchanting scenery, he became acquainted, through the accident already described, with Mr. Harcourt.

In the person of Edward Rainsford Norton there was

nothing remarkable. He was tall, and well proportioned; good-humor enlivened his benevolent countenance, and the Christian sentiments which adorned his heart, were rendered more attractive by the polish of his manners.

This was the youth selected by Sir James and his lady, as the future husband of their amiable Maria. Mr. Rainsford, the uncle, was most anxious that such an alliance should take place, as he was persuaded that his beloved nephew could never fix his choice more advantageously than on the interesting Miss Alton.

"They are formed for each other, my dear friend," he used to say to Sir James; "and it is the subject of my earnest prayers that, when they are introduced, they may prove mutually agreeable."

Edward, when a boy, was a frequent visitor at the Park; but the lapse of ten years, during which he was a stranger there, had almost obliterated him from remembrance; and as the young ladies had never been accustomed to call him, or hear him called, by any other surname than Rainsford, they did not recognize, in the description which Mr. Harcourt gave of his friend Norton, the favorite play-fellow of their childhood.

Sir James, with the anxious solicitude of a parent, constantly kept him in view. Although at a distance, he watched, as it were, over his conduct, and had always the pleasure to find it worthy of his approbation. Mr. Harcourt's letter confirmed his good opinion, and made him more and more desirous to secure for Miss Alton so amiable a husband. It was not, however, the intention of these affectionate parents to constrain their child to accept of young Norton, if she should feel the least repugnance to him: they were even in doubt whether she would not decline marriage altogether, and determine to embrace a religious life. Should this latter state be her choice, and really a call from God, they generously resolved not to oppose it, although the sacrifice would be almost equal to that of Abraham, when he consented to immolate his only son. They had desired to have children, only that they might furnish subjects for heaven. They had consecrated each to God at its birth; and they fervently prayed, that the divine will might be accomplished in their regard, however painful it might be to parental feeling. Maria had never expressed any absolute predilection for a conventual life, but it was thought probable that she might



secretly harbor a wish of that nature. It was not, however, the design of her Christian parents, on her entrance into the world, to hurry her, as is too often the case, from one scene of dissipation to another, to divert her from such a purpose, if it really existed. They resolved, on the contrary, to indulge her religious habits, to countenance and facilitate her frequent approach to the sacraments, lest, by opposing her inclinations, they should either destroy the fabric of virtue, so happily erected, or *force* her to seek the means of protecting it in a convent. They designed to show her, that a well-regulated piety may, and ought to be practised, by persons who dwell in the world, and that salvation is attainable, without retiring to the cloister or the desert; that the religion of Jesus Christ was intended for the support and defence of those who live in society (the usual condition of man), and that its obligations are by no means incompatible with the particular duties of each individual; that whilst religion can never sanction a conformity to those customs of the world which are at variance with the precepts of the gospel, it is far from forbidding innocent amusements, or the moderate enjoyment of the goods and conveniences of life; and, in conclusion, that persons whose conduct is uniformly virtuous, are not only an ornament, but a real advantage, to society, by encouraging the weak to follow their example, and silently admonishing the lukewarm and indifferent, that the culpable neglect of moral and religious duties will find no excuse at the day of judgment, on the plea that it was not possible to fulfil them.

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## CHAPTER IJ.

THE long-wished for period, that was wholly to emancipate Miss Alton and her impatient sister from the discipline of the school-room, at length arrived, and Frances hailed the eighteenth anniversary of her birth with inexpressible delight. The early part of the morning, like that of the preceding year, was employed in the duties of religion, and the evening was ushered in by a little fête, at which the young ladies were formally introduced to a select circle of friends from among the neighboring gentry. The middle of this happy day was agreeably occupied by presiding at a *déjeûné à la fourchette*, which, at Maria's request, was given to the children of the two schools.

It was now the end of May, and the third week of June being fixed on for the commencement of the intended tour, the necessary preparations engrossed much of the time and thoughts of the young ladies. Martha Clayton, who had been very well brought up by her excellent mother, was engaged to wait on the two sisters, and she felt as much delight as they did, at the prospect of the approaching journey.

When it was known in the village, and its environs, that the baronet was about to quit the Park, for nearly two years, a general gloom overspread the inhabitants; for though it was intimated that the aged poor would not lose their weekly allowance, or the laboring class, their usual employment, yet their noble patrons were so much beloved, that the idea of not occasionally seeing them, for so long a period, was a subject of unfeigned regret. The gardener's feast would lose half its charms, if Sir James were not there, to encourage the young laborers by his highly valued commendations; and if his lady and daughter were not present, to taste the fruits, admire the flowers and assist in bestowing the anxiously hoped-for rewards. The reflection, too, that they were about to depart when the anniversary of the festival was drawing so near, cast an additional shade over the prospects of the villagers, and was a source of sincere and daily lamentation.

Teresa, who dreaded the moment in which she should be separated from her beloved parents, sympathized in the grief of their humble dependents, and earnestly begged, that the journey might be delayed till after the celebration of the annual feast. She was seconded in her request by Maria, who never sought self-gratification, at the expense of the happiness, or even the pleasure, of others. Not so the ardent Frances, who was impatient to be gone, and thought every day a week, till the carriages were at the door.

Neither Sir James nor Lady Alton required much entreaty, to induce them to yield to the prayer of their weeping Teresa; to the regret, therefore, of Frances and Martha Clayton, the journey was postponed till after the fête. As soon as this determination was made known, the pleasing intelligence spread rapidly from house to house, and joy diffused itself over every countenance.

Grateful for this mark of condescension, the young laborers toiled with increased zest, and each department of cottage gardening was conducted with renovated dili-

gence. Nothing was omitted that skill or industry could accomplish, for the preservation of the fruits, vegetables, and even flowers, and no trouble was spared to remove the noxious weed, or keep off the birds, that might prove destructive to the objects which they cherished so fondly.

Sir James Alton looked on the little colony that surrounded him as his children, and they, in return, considered him as their patron, benefactor and father. He gave great encouragement to his poor tenants; and when he found, that they had improved their little to the utmost, and thence concluded, that an increase of their property would stimulate them to further exertion, he persuaded them to rent an acre or two of land, and to purchase a cow, which, by augmenting their little stock, would add materially to their domestic enjoyments. It was the opinion of the philanthropic baronet, that, when humble independence rewards the labour of the peasant, he has an interest in society, an excitement to virtue, and comforts that strongly attach him to his home and his native soil. He feels that he requires the assistance of the rich, and that they also have need of him. This mutual dependence reconciles him to his lowly state, and the happiness that results from his ameliorated condition, inspires him with sentiments of gratitude to God, respect for his superiors, and obedience to the laws.

Each succeeding year proved to Sir James, that this was no speculative theory, and demonstrated more and more, the salutary effects of a system, which was at first ridiculed as romantic and impracticable. Those, however, who had formerly censured the plan, now resigned their prejudices, and candidly acknowledged the important benefits which had sprung from its adoption.

Crime had considerably decreased; indeed, a new race of beings seemed to have fixed their abode at Alton; for, during the last five years, no one within its precincts had applied for parochial relief, or been accused of the most trifling misdemeanor. Men who used to be idle and profligate, gradually became laborious and moral; the women, to display their industry, vied with each other, in the cleanliness of their cottages, the good order of their families, the neatness of their own and their children's apparel; and the village, which had previously been disgraced by three public houses, could now scarcely maintain one. It is idleness, vice and misery that usually conduct men to a tavern;

remove the former, and the latter will soon be neglected. If those who are blessed with the opportunity, would try the harmless experiment, furnish the laborer with a comfortable dwelling, afford him a stimulus to industry, an encouragement to virtue, and give a religious education to his children ; if they would awaken in his breast the laudable desire of independence, and supply him with the means of attaining it, the poor man would then be no longer a burthen to his parish, or a reproach to his country.

The highest ambition of a steady youth brought up at Alton, was to merit the promise of a cottage, when he purposed to marry. As soon as this favour was obtained, he with prudent forecast, laid by all that rigid economy could spare from his hard-earned wages, in order to furnish it, which, with the assistance of the proffered bounty of Sir James, he was enabled comfortably to effect. The virtuous maiden he selected, labored also to do her part, and saved her money, to provide a tolerable supply of linen for the house, a set of gay tea things to adorn her cupboard, and a stock of creditable apparel fit for her station. When a young couple were united under circumstances so auspicious, when their motive was pure, and their lives were virtuous, they could scarcely fail to be happy. Labor, indeed, was their portion ; but, blessed with health, their toil was sweet, because it procured them the bread of independence, and nourished the fond hope, that, in their old age they should not be obliged to implore the charity of others, or to become the miserable inmates of a workhouse. Hunger seasoned their homely but plentiful meal, fatigue made rest desirable, and, invigorated by unbroken slumbers, they arose with the early dawn, offered their short, but fervent prayers to Heaven, and, with hearts gay as the lark that cheered them with his song ; contentedly resumed their ordinary employment.

This state of humble felicity was common to most of the residents at the interesting hamlet of Alton. The diligence with which they cultivated the little spot that formed their pride, enabled them occasionally to have fruit, flowers and vegetables to dispose of. They carried these to the neighboring town, on the market-day, and were sure to return with empty baskets. Their civility, the neatness of their dress, and, above all, their conscientious honesty, soon distinguished them from others. Their butter, honey, pigeons, or other commodities, always met with a ready sale ; nay, they were frequently stopped on the road, as

they approached the suburbs, and were eased of their burthen long before they could reach the market-place.

The improved appearance of Alton Park and its environs, was also another source of advantage to the peasantry ; as, during the summer months, excursions were frequently made from the neighboring towns, to enjoy, for a few hours, the pleasure which the picturesque beauties, concentrated in this delightful spot, were sure to create in the minds of those who beheld them. On these occasions, the parties generally sought a resting-place in one of the cottages, where, accommodated with a neat parlor, they were supplied with boiling water, and cream for their tea. Strangers, on their first visit, often found it difficult to determine where to choose ; for each cottage that peeped through the clustering trees, and presented its white front, covered with the luxuriant vine, mingled with roses, invited them to enter ; while, at almost every turn of the road, some fresh prospect of the varied scenery around broke upon their view

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## CHAPTER LII.

THE seventh anniversary of the gardeners' fete was announced by the usual demonstrations of joy, and conducted in the manner which has already been described ; but the number of competitors for reward was considerably augmented. This year the appearance of the fruit, vegetables and flowers was much improved ; for, as the knowledge of gardening became more general, emulation induced the cottagers to apply to the culture of articles which procured them both advantage and amusement, with all the attention they were able to bestow. Thus, many of their specimens would not have disgraced an exhibition of professed horticulturists. Sir James declared himself highly pleased, and his commendations were more grateful to the hearts of these honest people than any thing his purse could otherwise have supplied. For the first few years, none but such as might properly be denominated children, formed the procession ; but these were now followed by young married couples, who, having yet no children to work for them, were, nevertheless, emulous to obtain a share in the approving smile of their noble patrons. Among these, the most conspicuous were Denis Barton and his wife Margaret, with whom, since the death of his aged grandfather and grandmother, he had lately entered into the marriage

state. It is needless to describe again particulars which have been already related. Suffice it to remark, that all were, as usual, highly gratified. The only subject of regret was, that the hours fled too swiftly, and would soon put an end to their innocent enjoyments.

Before Sir James and his family took leave of the assembled multitude, the former expressed a hope that, during his visit to the Continent, none would relax in the performance of any of the duties attached to their station. He assured them, that, though living at a distance, they would be often present to his mind, and that he should always feel much gratification in hearing of their prosperity. He, moreover, exhorted them to persevere in their virtuous habits; to instil into their children the love and fear of God, and to neglect no means that might insure them the blessing of a good conscience in this transient life, and eternal happiness in that which was to come. Affected more than they could describe, by the interest which he took in their welfare, several of his auditors were bathed in tears, and all promised that, throughout his absence, there should be no cause of complaint. Many stepped forward to solicit the honor of shaking hands, and Sir James withdrew amidst reiterated blessings and fervent prayers for his health, prosperity and safe return.

On the following morning, the carriages were at the door by nine o'clock. Frances was the only one who entered with a light heart. It is true, she was grieved at parting with her sister; but her buoyant spirits exhilarated by the prospect of seeing the world (the enjoyments of which, her lively imagination had painted in the most vivid colors) prevented her from manifesting the regret with which her affectionate heart would have overflowed under other circumstances. In her childish eagerness to depart, it was necessary to remind her that she would be absent nearly two years. Far different was the behavior of the more sensitive Maria, who, when the moment of separation was at hand, could no longer restrain her tears. She took a kind leave of all the domestics, and assured them that she should receive great pleasure from beholding the same faces on her return; and when the time arrived to bid adieu to her sister and governess, to her dear Jane, and Mr. Morini, her grief was so violent, that her father judged it expedient to reprove her for indulging this excessive emotion, as it not only injured herself, but added to the sufferings of the friends she was about to quit, and betrayed

a want of fortitude unbecoming her character. To shorten this trying scene, Mr. Morini, though scarcely less affected himself, hastened the travellers into the carriage, and then used his best efforts to console those who were left behind

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### CHAPTER LIII.

THE carriages were quickly out of view, and the afflicted Teresa, who had endeavoured to stifle her own grief, that she might not add to that of her parents, now gave full indulgence to the sorrows of her oppressed heart. Clasped in the arms of Jane, they mingled their tears, and for a while, neither was able to console the other. The governess sought not to check this natural ebullition of grief, knowing that it would shortly exhaust itself; and that the unreasonableness of continuing to give way to it would quickly be apparent. She fondly watched over her interesting pupil, now rendered doubly dear to her, by the absence of her noble parents. A few days, however, restored Teresa to her wonted spirits, and she applied with diligence to her usual studies, which, in the course of the last month, had, from time to time, been much interrupted by her sisters; for, as they were on the point of being separated from her for the first time, and for so long a period, they were desirous to enjoy more of her company than was consistent with the regulations of the school room.

Every fortnight, a packet of letters gave intelligence of the travellers, and proved a source of consolation and amusement to those who received them. Teresa conducted herself, during the absence of her parents, with the same docility and affectionate respect to her governess, and with the same condescension and mildness towards the servants, as when they were at home. By resolutely exerting herself to overcome her defects (as she promised to do on being admitted to the sacrament of confirmation), she had effectually conquered that irritability and violence of temper, which, in her childhood, threatened destruction to her own peace, and to that of all who were connected with her. To the friendship of Jane, though several years her senior, and to the example and tender solicitude of her eldest sister, was she indebted for many of her amiable qualities. On the eve of bidding adieu to the Park, Miss Alton requested Teresa to become her almoner, and confided to

her the extent of her charities ; hoping that, whilst this office would render her familiar with the wants of the poor, it would enlarge her heart with compassion for their sufferings. This mark of confidence delighted her ; and when, in distributing the weekly allowance to the aged or infirm, she witnessed their gratitude, and heard the benedictions that were fervently invoked on her beloved sister, she renewed her determination to walk constantly in her footsteps.

No event worthy of remark took place at Alton, during the two years' absence of the baronet. Every thing was conducted with the same regularity that his presence would have commanded ; and if Teresa sometimes breathed a wish for the return of her parents and sisters, it was immediately followed by a grateful acknowledgment of the solicitude which every one evinced to contribute to her happiness. One little incident, however, occurred a few months before the return of Sir James, which, in the sequel, proved highly advantageous to Miss Mordaunt.

The governess and her young companions having strolled, one day, to the distance of about a mile and a half from the Park, were unexpectedly overtaken by a heavy shower. The only habitation in view was an elegant little villa, where Miss Hargrave proposed they should ask for shelter, as she conceived it to be unoccupied, except by a man and his wife, who had been placed in charge of it, until it should be let. On approaching the gate, which she did with all convenient speed, they observed that it was opened by a stranger, who having remarked their exposure to the storm, had hastened forward, it appeared, with a view of inviting them to enter the house.

When Miss Hargrave intimated the surprise she felt, on discovering that Ivy Cottage was inhabited by a family, she was informed by Mr. Levison, that he had, within a few days taken up his residence there, and that he was a stranger in the neighbourhood. He added, that being fond of a rural life, and hearing that the estate was to be sold, he had become the purchaser. He observed that he expected his sister in the course of the following week, and requested to know whom he had the honor of sheltering.

As the rain continued, Mr. Levison offered to send his servant to the Park for the carriage. The ladies gladly acceded to the proposal, and, in the mean while, he presented them with refreshments, and used his best exertions to entertain the guests whom Providence, he said, had conducted thither, to break the monopoly of his solitude.



His manners were pleasing, and his conversation was that of a man who had seen and read much. He called at the Park the next day and left his card ; but no acquaintance could be formed with him during the absence of Sir James. He never met with the ladies unless by accident, as the governess prudently avoided the walk which led to his house. In these occasional rencounters, he had seen enough of Miss Mordaunt to become sensible of her attractions, and to be induced to write to her on the subject ; but he was given to understand, in reply, that she must decline any correspondence with him until the return of Sir James Alton. To this decision he was under the necessity of submitting, although every month appeared a year, till the anxiously expected arrival was announced. He had, however, introduced himself to Mr. Morini, and they were highly pleased with each other.

Mr. Levison's motive, in the purchase of Ivy Cottage, was its vicinity to a Catholic chapel. He possessed an income of about nine hundred pounds a year, and was desirous to meet with a lady (to whom the country and rural occupations were not disagreeable) who would be willing to share his moderate fortune.

Although the governess was not ignorant that Jane felt no decided predilection for Mr. Levison, she sometimes availed herself of a favorable opportunity to enlarge on the obligations of parents.

"Parents, my dear young friend," said Miss Hargrave, in one of these conversations, "ought to be the first instructors of their children. No task is more important, no duty more strongly inculcated in holy writ, no employment more conducive to eternal happiness ; and yet none is, in many essential particulars, more frequently neglected. This office, which is of vital consequence, both to their offspring and to society, devolves generally on the mother. It therefore behoves every young woman to make herself familiar with the extent and object of the maternal duties. Natural affection strongly urges her to use every precaution for the preservation of the body, and the fashion and opinion of the world will teach her how to adorn it ; but religion alone can impart that salutary knowledge which is requisite to form the Christian, and to instruct her little ones unto salvation."

"Will parents have to answer before God for the souls of their children?" inquired Miss Mordaunt.—"Undoubt-

say, if, through their culpable negligence, or bad example, these precious souls should be lost."

"This is a serious consideration," rejoined the former. "Will you, dear madam, oblige me with some advice on a subject of so much interest?"—"It is not necessary, my love," said Miss Hargrave, "to burthen your memory at present by entering into any minute detail. Should you hereafter become a mother, I counsel you to peruse very attentively some excellent instructions that you will meet with in a work entitled 'The whole duty of a Christian,' the third part of which treats on the 'Christian Education of Children.' I will, therefore, notice briefly a few only of the duties which are there described as incumbent on parents.

"First, they owe to their children a rational and Christian love, vigilant care, just severity, correction, instruction and good example; and on this latter much depends, as precepts without example have little influence over the minds of youth. A second duty of parents is to study the particular temper of their children, that they may be able to inspire them with a love of virtue and a horror of vice. For this purpose, one must be conciliated by mildness and encouragement, another by reason and persuasion, while a third can be restrained only by fear; for the same mode of treatment will not succeed with every disposition. Thirdly, parents should accustom their children to diligence, industry and order. They should never leave them without some employment suitable to their age, because idleness frequently leads to vice; but they should regulate their hours, and ascertain that they are punctual in the performance of every duty, since it is good that a child should bear the yoke from his youth. A fourth and most important duty of parents is to teach their children betimes to know, to love, and to honor God. For this end, they should instil into their minds a lively apprehension of the divine presence, a great horror of sin, and an affection for the holy exercises of religion; teaching them such prayers as are adapted to their capacities, and being careful that they say them in a devout and becoming manner. The passions likewise of children should be restrained, and the growth of ill temper be checked in infancy, lest their evil propensities acquire an absolute sway, and chastisement be administered when it can no longer be useful."

"Do you conceive that those parents act well who are perpetually scolding their children?" enquired Jane.—"Certainly not. Correction should be regulated by pru-

dence and discretion, be proportioned to the fault, and never resorted to until more gentle means have been tried without success. Parents in general are not over harsh—they are rather disposed to be too indulgent; but those who belong to the latter class should remember and tremble at the fate of Heli, who was punished with sudden death, not for having omitted to correct his children, but because his reproofs were not sufficiently severe. We may resume this subject on another opportunity; for Teresa, I see, is coming, equipped for a walk.”

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## CHAPTER. LIV.

NEARLY two years had now elapsed since the departure of Sir James Alton, and the inmates of the Park were anxiously anticipating his return, when letters announced that he might be expected immediately. His lady and Maria had long sighed for the moment which would unite them once more to those whom their hearts yearned to embrace, and establish them again in their peaceful and elegant retreat. Unlooked-for occurrences had induced the family to leave Rome sooner than was originally intended, and several months were in consequence passed in London. During this time, the young ladies were introduced at court, and had an opportunity of viewing every object that was worthy of inspection in the metropolis.

Frances, who at length grew tired of the succession of amusements in which she was continually engaged, beheld, in her intercourse with the world, much to surprise, and much to disgust her. Professions of friendship, she found, were not always sincere; and the compliments that were often lavishly bestowed, her good sense quickly discovered to be a sort of homage to her rank and fortune, rather than to her merit. Her lively disposition and pleasing manners, which secured her the attentions of the gentlemen, often excited the malevolence of such of her own sex as were less amiable, or less highly gifted than herself; and as she was sometimes so incautious as to indulge in a little piquant raillery, she was not without enemies. Her ingenuous nature would not allow her to conceal from her parents any circumstance that caused her uneasiness. In the unrestrained conversations which she had with them on the subject, she freely admitted her disappointment, and acknowledged the truth of the doctrine they had

endeavored to inculcate—that virtuous pursuits and rational pleasures moderately indulged, can alone conduce to real happiness and peace of mind.

On Sir James's arrival in London, Mr. Rainsford and his nephew were in readiness to receive him, and the latter was introduced to the family. The sisters were surprised to discover, that Mr. Norton and Edward Rainsford, their early playfellow, were the same person, and expressed their astonishment that it should have been kept a secret. Young Norton soon distinguished Maria from the sprightly Frances, and overjoyed his uncle by requesting his interest with Sir James, to secure him the hand of his eldest daughter. Edward was not indifferent to Miss Alton : she esteemed him highly, but having never thought of him as a husband, she desired that she might be allowed a fortnight to consider of the proposal. That time she employed in earnest prayer to consult the will of God ; and at length, to the great satisfaction of her parents, consented to receive his addresses. She knew young Norton to be an amiable man, of a disposition suitable to her own, and calculated, she thought, to render her happy. She was aware also of the severe disappointment which her refusal would inflict on her parents ; and having no decided call to a religious life (though most piously disposed,) she hoped that, in uniting herself to the virtuous partner they had selected for her, she should accomplish the will of God, and work out her salvation. Her mother's irreproachable conduct, she proposed to make the model of her own, and on all occasions to solicit her counsel, and follow her advice.

The news of this projected match preceded Miss Alton to the Park, and was a subject of pleasing contemplation to its inmates. They were assured, that she would reflect honor on whatever situation she was destined by Providence to fill, and the favorable judgment they had formed of Mr. Norton's character, relieved them from all anxiety with regard to her domestic comfort.

In less than six months after the return of the family to the Park, the accomplished Maria became the bride of the equally amiable Edward Rainsford Norton, and the same day united the destinies of Jane Mordaunt and Mr. Levi-son. By a serious and devout preparation for the holy sacrament of matrimony, Christ was invited to the wedding, and the choicest benedictions of Heaven sanctified their nuptials. Their happy union was blessed with a

numerous offspring, whom they exhorted to virtue both by precept and example, leaving no means untried to correct their evil inclinations, and to train them up in the fear of the Lord.

Several of their children embraced a religious life, and those who remained in the world did honor to their rank, by the lustre of their public and domestic virtues.

Mr. Norton closely followed the example of Sir James, in improving and beautifying his estate, and in the encouragement of morality and industry among the laboring class of his tenants. His fortune, which was ample, he expended on objects of public and private utility; and thus, whilst he added to his own comforts, promoted, in a material degree, the interests of others.

The governess, when she had completed the education of Teresa, was requested to remain with her two years longer as an occasional companion. Sir James then settled an annuity on her, and she divided her time almost equally between Lady Alton and her former pupils.

Frances had received many advantageous offers of marriage, but had refused them all. Every gratification that rank or fortune could bestow was at her command, yet her heart was not content. She had tasted the dissipating pleasures of the world, but found them constantly alloyed with some portion of bitterness, and incapable of conferring any real felicity on a soul created for nobler enjoyments. Fortunately for her, as it would be for thousands, the seeds of religion were too carefully and deeply implanted in her mind, to allow her to forget that she was a candidate for heaven. The frequent conflicts she had sustained between duty and self-will caused her so much uneasiness, that, after mature deliberation, she resolved to abandon pleasures to which she felt herself too strongly attached, and which, she was fearful, she could not use with the moderation that religion demands. "What will it avail me," she would cry, when her parents objected to sanction her wish, "what will it avail me to gain the whole world, if I lose my soul? You have taught me the value of my soul, the importance of salvation. I have not, like Maria, the courage to lead a devout life, amid the fascinations that surround me. Finish, then, the good work you have begun, and consent to my withdrawing from the dangers to which I am continually exposed by my ardent disposition and natural love of pleasure." After much solicitation, her affectionate parents yielded to her request, and, at twenty-five

years of age, to the surprise of the world, the regret of her friends, and her own extreme contentment, the accomplished Frances Alton, to whom the idea of subjection and restraint had ever been painful, joyfully embraced the yoke of the Lord, and in the precincts of the cloister, became a model of humility and exact obedience.

Lady Harcourt reflected deeply on the lessons she had received from her friends at the Park ; and being at length convinced, from all she had heard and witnessed there, of the truth and holiness of the Catholic religion, courageously determined to embrace it. She only lamented that so important a change was not accomplished at an earlier period of her life, crying out with St. Austin, in the fervor of her soul, "Too late have I known thee, O ancient truth ! too late have I loved thee, O ancient beauty ! Happy those who have been educated from their childhood in the knowledge of this saving faith ! Never can they be sufficiently grateful for so unmerited a blessing !"

We have now briefly disposed of the personages that have figured most conspicuously in this simple and unadorned narrative. We have attempted to demonstrate that ill temper and violent passions are always a torment to those who are the slaves to them, and that piety and virtue alone conduce to real happiness. We have likewise endeavored to show, that the well-being, not only of individuals, but of mankind at large, essentially depends on the religious instruction of young persons, and the proper employment of the gifts of fortune.

The author is doubtful whether her feeble efforts to blend amusement with instruction will produce the desired result ; and she is conscious that she ought to apologize for presuming, with her very limited abilities, to write on a subject so important as the "religious education of youth." In conclusion, she earnestly prays that Almighty God, who frequently makes use of the weakest instruments to accomplish merciful designs, will bless this undertaking, and, without regard to its many imperfections, render it advantageous to those who will favor it with an attentive perusal.















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